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ABYSSINIA SUPPLEMENT

# THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

## The Week-end Review

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CONTENTS

COMMENTS . . . . . *Page* 293
FOR LEAGUE OR EMPIRE? . . . . . 295
A HUNDRED YEARS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT. By G. D. H. Cole . . . . . 296
A LONDON DIARY. . . . . 298
THIS ENGLAND . . . . . 299
THE ANTI-FASCIST MOVEMENT IN FRANCE. By François Girard. . . . . 299
LOVE OF BIRDS. By Y.Y. . . . . 300
CORRESPONDENCE . . . . . 301
From G. J. Corbishley; Gordon Hosking; D. D. Karvé; Forty Years an Exporter; Rev. Basil Martin; Gutless; Patrick Du Val; Col. G. Jones Mitton; Norman Jones; L. W. Bryant; A. W. Carter.
CLOSE QUARTERS. By Desmond MacCarthy . . 303
NEWS REELS. By Glyn Roberts . . . . . 304
PEG WOFFINGTON. By John Marks . . . *Page* 305
PLAYS AND PICTURES . . . . . 306
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By David Garnett . . . 307
REVIEWS:
New Novels. By Peter Quennell . . . . 308
Inadequate Criticism. By K. John . . . 309
The Abbey Theatre. By Austen Clarke . . 310
A Holy Alliance. By J. H. Driberg . . . 310
Odyssey in Ballet Shoes. By Geoffrey Parsons 312
More About Plants . . . . . 313
Abyssinia. By Igor Vinogradoff . . . . 314
Wordsworth . . . . . 314
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS . . . . . 316
CROSSWORD . . . . . 319
THE WEEK IN THE CITY. By Toreador . . . 320
THE ABYSSINIAN DISPUTE (*Supplement*) . . . 321

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

IF the Council can stomach Baron Aloisi's speech there is no dirt it is not capable of swallowing. If it climbs down now we are, in truth, back at the "good old rule, the simple plan, that they should take who have the power and they should keep who can." If frontier troubles are a reason for war, no part of Africa would ever be peaceful; if a disputed debt of £14,000 is an argument for expelling a League member, few, if any, nations would be entitled to membership; if the possession of slaves is an excuse for invasion, every Empire, including Italy and Great Britain, stands in need of a civilising invader, and if arming in self-defence is a threat to one's neighbours, then Abyssinia is about the least guilty, because one of the least armed, States in the League. All this impertinence must be swept aside, and the Council has to tackle the gravest situation of its history—a situation which, as our Supplement shows, need never have reached this pass. The hope is that even now France and Great Britain will realise that to make the League work they must stick to its provisions in all cases and not only demand support in those in which their private interests are particularly involved. Great Britain must support reasonable claims on its help in Europe, and France support us against Italy. Otherwise we must pack up.

### The League's Problem

Mr. Eden made an excellent speech in which he revealed for the first time the full extent of the offer made to Mussolini in Paris. England and France offered far more than a remedy for all the grievances produced by Baron Aloisi; they offered Italy control of the Abyssinian gendarmerie, communications and Post Office—terms obviously incompatible with their obligation under the Covenant to maintain the integrity and political independence of Ethiopia. By turning down this offer, the Duce proved that he wanted war for its own sake. Actually he saw in this offer a sure sign that the League would never oppose him even when he went to war. In this he may be mistaken. The League's duty is to prevent war, and it has ample authority and power to do so. To-day the probability is that it will continue to talk about conciliation until the Duce invades Abyssinia and then discuss punitive sanctions under Article 16. Because of the past division in the Cabinet—the anti-League Londonderry section of the Cabinet has hampered Mr. Eden at every stage—we have failed to prevent war. To-day we are taking measures against possible violence on the part of Mussolini in the near future. The Atlantic fleet is on the spot; we have put a boom across Malta, sent three batteries of anti-aircraft guns to Malta and begun the process of evacuating the women and children. If the League now fails to keep together there is grave danger that in a few months' time the British public will find itself faced with a demand

for a private war against Italy. It may be difficult to isolate the Abyssinian war.

### More Ballyhouston

Last week we commented on the extraordinary antics of the Beaverbrook Press which after shouting for months that the League was dragging us into war and that "sanctions meant war," suddenly turned round and said that there could be no war because there could never be unanimity and therefore could be no sanctions. In short by its own admission its whole policy for months and indeed years had been so much Ballyhouston. This week the wheel has come full circle. On Monday, September 2nd without a word of apology the leading article in the *Daily Express* said in italics: "*If there are sanctions, there will be no war*" and declared, as we tried to explain to Lord Beaverbrook months ago, that since France and England, Jugoslavia and the smaller Powers were overwhelmingly strong when united, sanctions would be effective in stopping the Duce. Unfortunately to-day with Italian preparations fully made, sanctions will be far more difficult to carry out and may very possibly involve war. But at least we welcomed Lord Beaverbrook's *volte face*. But that was only his morning mood. In the evening he proved a backslider. For the *Evening Standard* of the same day repeated the very nonsense that the *Daily Express* of that morning had repudiated. The President of the T.U.C. was scolded in the *Evening Standard* for advocating sanctions and wanting to send "our sons to fight Fascism in East Africa." Lord Beaverbrook must make peace with himself.

### Italy as Coloniser

Although the Duce constantly pleads over-population as an excuse for the rape of Abyssinia, it was recently reported from Asmara that General de Bono had issued a proclamation assuring the natives of Eritrea that Italy would never take land from them in order to make room for Italian families. Perhaps a trifle unfortunately General de Bono referred to a similar promise made by General Baldissera, the conqueror of the Eritrea plateau, as long ago as 1889; for in that case the promise was broken within twelve months. Italy discovered that in Ethiopian law all land belonged to the Negus and on this plea confiscated 700,000 acres of desirable plateau land for Italian colonisation. The result was the agrarian rising which preceded the war of 1895 and the campaign of Adowa. No Ethiopian will doubt that if Adowa is now "avenged" the best Ethiopian land will be similarly confiscated, perhaps with the backing of the same useful legal doctrine—which is, after all, very much what some other European governments have done in their East African colonies. In Libya the Italian rule is "that all land belongs to the domain if it is not permanently under cultivation." As a result nomads are without legal rights in their grazing grounds; and in 1930 General Graziani (who is now commanding in Italian Somaliland) applied this law to 80,000 nomads who were rounded up wholesale and kept behind barbed wire enclosures on the coast. The *Corriere della Sera* remarked at the time that nomads found in their old haunts after the deportation were "shot like wolves." In a recent semi-official handbook for the Italian colonies Italians are told that "we must make people feel that face to face with natives a civilisation like ours can make no compromises . . . it must assert itself without allowing anything to stand in its way." The world is not left in doubt about the meaning of Italy's civilising mission.

### The Zionist Congress

The tranquillity of this year's Zionist Congress at Lucerne was largely due to the decision of the Revisionists, who were generally responsible for the "scenes" in former Congresses, to secede from the Zionist organisation and hold their own Congress in Vienna. Labour, which was the dominating party at Lucerne and constituted 40 per cent. of the whole, adopted a conciliatory attitude to the other parties, believing it to be in the interests of Labour immigrants as well as of the movement as a whole that Zionism should be directed at present by a Coalition Executive. The attendance of more than thirty delegates from Germany probably exercised a restraining influence on references to Nazi persecution, though both the President, Dr. Sokolow and the American Zionist leader, Dr. Stephen Wise, denounced it in scathing language. The German delegates received express permission from the German authorities to come, doubtless because Zionism is favoured by the Nazis as a way of stimulating the Jewish exodus. Acute differences of opinion arose about the arrangement made over two years ago, whereby Jews emigrating from Germany to Palestine are able to take a certain amount of money out of the country through the export of German goods to Palestine. Clearing-houses have been established for the purpose in both countries. It seems that the Germans, in their reluctance actually to let money leave the country, compel the clearing-house or "Trustee Office" in Palestine to accept goods for sale in other countries and to collect the cash from these countries. It is not surprising that this should lead to controversy.

### The Trade Unions and the Communists

The Trades Union Congress at Margate had a close division on the question of the "Black Circular," which was issued by the General Council with the object of preventing the affiliated Trade Unions and also the Trades Councils from admitting to official positions, or as delegates, any member of the Communist Party or of other "black" organisations. The miners led the attack on the General Council, and were seconded by the engineers and other important groups; and it was chiefly due to a ferocious attack on the "subverters" by Mr. Ernest Bevin that the General Council got home in the end by 1,800,000 to 1,400,000 votes against a motion to refer back the relevant part of its Report. A second vote, in an attempt directly to censure the General Council, showed a very much larger majority; but the earlier vote represented the real cleavage of opinion. After so narrow a victory, it seems likely that the General Council's policy of excluding the Communists will have to be modified. The General Council will hardly attempt to coerce the miners and the other big dissentient Unions, whatever they may feel able to do in the case of the Trades Councils. Of course, the strength of the opposition indicates in the main not sympathy with Communist Party tactics, which are almost generally objected to, but a sense of the danger of introducing political discrimination into Trade Union affairs. It has always been a recognised principle of Trade

Unionism to keep the ranks open to all parties; and, though of late almost all the leading officials have been in the Labour Party, there has been nothing to prevent the election of a Conservative or a Liberal or a Communist.

### The Depressed Areas

Apart from this debate, the most important issue which came up in the early stages of the Congress proceedings was that of the depressed areas. Mr. Bevin, speaking on behalf of the General Council, pleaded for a more ambitious attempt to set the depressed areas again on their feet by establishing Commissioners with far wider powers and ampler funds at their disposal. He wanted the Government to treat the Commissioners not as supplementary agencies, authorised merely to fill up minor gaps in the departmental equipment, but as independent authorities with extensive powers and a sum of at least £20,000,000 handed to them for spending at their discretion. On behalf of the Trade Unions, he made the Government an offer that, if it would act on these lines, they would give all the help they could towards making the scheme work. Mr. Bevin held out the hope that money spent in this way, including sums advanced free of interest for a period of years, would prove to have been well invested, because of their efforts in reviving wealth and taxable capacity in the depressed districts. Undoubtedly, these views are sound; and no less sound was Mr. Bevin's pointed repudiation of plans for overcoming the depression by settling a host of additional workers on the land. The other important event at this Congress was a manifesto denouncing Italy's aggression and calling for a World Economic Conference to remove the causes of this and similar disputes.

### The G.W.R. Centenary

The Great Western was entitled to its unusual centenary celebration, for this famous line has a special standing in England. Its early broad gauge had a swagger quality, it serves the coloured counties, and it established long ago a fine record with its crack trains. Moreover, for fifty years or so its shares were something like a criterion of English prosperity. So much is common ground, and the G.W.R. can be proud of the generous fashion in which its hundred years of public service has been acknowledged by the press. But the directors, on the other hand, could have little reason for continuing self-gratulation as they contemplated the display of bunting in Paddington Station. As owners of the only main-line terminus in the West End, the G.W.R. had a finer opportunity than any one of the northern lines to build a modern station in appropriate surroundings. But Paddington, even after the recent partial reconstruction, is one of the poorest and least convenient of termini, while the directors have been inexplicably blind to their own chances and to the public needs in respect of the environs. A more wretched approach to a great railway station than Praed Street is hardly to be found in any metropolis. Here, in these days of swollen land values, is a troublesome problem for the G.W.R. authorities to grapple with. And we may be permitted to wonder how the directors feel when they remember that Oxford railway station is theirs.

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## FOR LEAGUE OR EMPIRE?

THE civilised world grasps clearly enough the decisions that are in the League's keeping this week. It has a few days, before the rains cease in Abyssinia, in which to save from total ruin the whole conception of international order. Rather more than a year ago, the Duce made up his mind to play the Caesar in East Africa, and since the Wal-Wal incident, last December, he has advertised the coming war with an open effrontery that has no parallel in modern history. The League procrastinated, and shrank from meeting his challenge. The efforts of London and Paris to find a compromise by the ordinary channels of diplomacy were undertaken many months too late and, as the authoritative account of the whole dispute published in our Supplement shows, they were conceived from the first on the wrong lines. Before Mr. Eden went to Rome and long before the Paris negotiations, the Duce had so popularised the project of a spectacular conquest, that retreat for him was barely possible. If, at the end of last year, the British and French Governments had jointly and plainly informed him of their determination to oppose any war of conquest, while offering to further reasonable economic ambitions, they might, perhaps, have turned him from his purpose. Instead, from January onwards, they involved themselves in the manœuvres that resulted in the creation of the Stresa Front. After confidential conversations with the French the Duce scanned the balance of power in Europe, and found the moment ideal for his enterprise. Neither of the Western Powers, he supposed, would dare by opposing him to risk his secession to the German camp, while the French were eager to tie themselves to him in what is virtually a military alliance. He serves them by fending off the threat of a Nazi victory in Austria. Dare they, at the price of risking Vienna, invoke against him a Covenant on which others have already trampled with impunity? He played his game with reckless daring, yet there was shrewd calculation behind it. He had tested the timidity of the League in the Corfu affair. He knew, moreover, that behind its façade of cosmopolitan impartiality, the tangible reality was a system of alliances aimed at Germany.

Two factors in this situation the Duce overlooked or minimised. If by his prolonged military posturings he raised the war-temper in Italy, he also frayed the nerves of the rest of the world. What the Kaiser did by violent gestures at long intervals, he did by a crescendo of incessant irritation. Even those who cared little for the League, and less for Ethiopia, were driven to revolt against the arrogant antics of this arch-gangster. Slowly, too slowly, there has developed, in this country at least, a temper of resistance bolder and solider than anything we have experienced since the Great War. So far from being depressed by the League's failure in Manchuria, this trend of opinion draws from that experience a paradoxical strength. The League failed once: it shall not fail again. It happens that this wholly disinterested concern for peace and an orderly world is in line with British Imperial interests, though few of those who feel it are aware of this convergence of motives. We are not thinking in this connection of the wretched and trivial incident of Mr. Reckitt's oil concession. There is every

reason to accept without qualification the denial of the Foreign Office that it had any knowledge whatever of that affair. A venture financed by the Standard group employed as agent an English financier versed in the intrigues of this part of the world, but the capital and the enterprise were wholly American. If the British Government had really thought of putting down "its paw" (to use the phrase of Pertinax) on this corner of Africa, it would have used some subsidiary of the Royal-Dutch-Shell companies and not the rival Standard group. All the evidence, over a long series of years, goes to show that from 1906, when first it recognised the greater part of Abyssinia as an Italian sphere of interest, the British Government has consistently renounced any aims of expansion in Ethiopia. The trading interest is negligible: few British experts have much belief in the mineral riches of this country: there are waste spaces enough to people elsewhere under the British flag. Cotton and coffee can, indeed, be grown in Abyssinia, but imperialists are already embarrassed by the world's plethora of these commodities. On the other hand, the leaders of imperial policy have awakened, somewhat tardily, to British interests of a wholly different kind. To surrender to a rampant and unfriendly Italy, control over Lake Tana would be to divide with her the command over the Nile Valley. Again, the establishment, in Ethiopia, of a strong Italian military and aerial base, would be to alter all the strategic conditions that govern the road to India. It results from these considerations that British policy, as we read it, must on self-regarding grounds uphold the political independence of Ethiopia, but be ready to look on Italian economic expansion in this region with goodwill. British action in this business has been slow, hesitating and timid, since the Cabinet is, or was, until a fortnight ago, divided in its attitude towards the League. Its fault lies not on this occasion in any underground imperial scheming, but in a failure to realise that the League is the only effective form of defence for the Empire as well as the rest of the world.

The problem is, now, whether over this issue the half-dead League can be re-animated. The League is an institution that must work, steadily, impartially, universally, if it is to work at all. One cannot, because one has no direct imperial issues at stake, put it to sleep while force rampages in Vilna, or Manchuria or the Chaco, and then rouse it with a clarion call to duty because the British Empire is nervous about Lake Tana. Needless to say, it is not in London only that this naive notion prevails of using the League from time to time for one's own special ends. The French, too, have their own elegant simplification: they see it as an engine for the enforcement of the Peace Treaties. They cared no more about Manchuria than did Sir John Simon, and left to themselves they would be indifferent to Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether the British Government, which, as recently as June, seemed in the naval negotiations to set no very high value on French goodwill, can swing Paris into line with this view of the Covenant—that it must work impartially, and all the time, on behalf of the humblest member of the League, on the Nile as certainly and as automatically as on the Danube and the Rhine.

On one condition this difficult feat might be compassed. As the critical moment approaches, when the French may have to sacrifice an ally by voting for preventive or penal sanctions, they will want to know with some clarity what the British Government will do if they, in their turn, are threatened in Europe. Precisely how sacred will the Covenant be in the eyes of Downing Street, if it is violated in Austria for example? Nothing less than a plain and affirmative answer will serve. The difficulty is that, while any British Government ought to give an unequivocal bond to uphold the Covenant and oppose the aggressor, it ought not to underwrite a rigid unalterable war settlement. Revision there must be. If that word hurts the French in Europe, it strikes at us elsewhere, for in other Continents we have the chief contribution to make, if the sated Empires are to meet the demand of the hungry Powers for economic opportunity. This is a large issue to raise between one sitting of the League's Council and another. That is the penalty of hand-to-mouth statesmanship. To give a general guarantee in plain terms and to mean it honourably—this even at the eleventh hour is possible. But experience warns us that the French do not value general pledges highly.

They will make, none the less, if they bargain pedantically, a grave psychological mistake. This affair has made the idea of collective security a reality in British thinking, as it never was before. In a re-animated League the French stand to gain more than they can lose by the Duce's wrath. Moreover—and this is perhaps the core of the whole question—the Duce's Dictatorship is not eternal. He has staked it on this adventure, and if, after the first spectacular successes, he has to face a united Europe as well as the climate and the guerrillas of Ethiopia, he will be involved, before many months are past, in an economic crisis that may be fatal to his authority. If a new Italy comes out of this affair, we may hope for a new Europe.

In the last few days at Geneva, two considerations seem decisive. The Council should aim not at punishing but at preventing a breach of the Covenant. And it must prepare at once to apply the whole weight of its sanctions, at least in the economic field. On this reckless adversary, engaged on a war for which he has long prepared, gentle and gradual pressure will have no effect. The League, if once it takes up his challenge, will have to use its overwhelming strength and authority to rid Europe of a dictator whose insane recklessness is a menace to the world.

## A HUNDRED YEARS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WHEN the first "Reformed" Parliament passed the Municipal Corporations Act a hundred years ago it had assuredly no intention of creating the modern system of Local Government. Reform of the "rotten" boroughs as local corporations seemed to follow logically on the reform of the method of parliamentary representation; and the mood of the Reformed Parliament in legislating about the future of the municipal authorities was far more that of destroying ancient abuses than that of creating new organs of local government. There is ample evidence of this in the fact that no attempt was made to transfer to the reconstituted corporations even such functions of local government, in the sense in which we think of it now, as did then exist. Such tasks as the lighting and paving of the streets, the removal of refuse, the provision of water, and other sanitary services were left in the hands of the bodies of *ad hoc* statutory commissioners who had obtained power to exercise them under numerous local private Acts. The poor laws were left—and remained until only the other day—in the hands of the separate

Boards of Guardians made general only in the previous year; and there was no attempt to equip the new towns with corporate institutions where they were not already in being. Nor was anything done for another half-century to equip the rural areas with any sort of self-governing institutions. The counties were left under the administration of the Justices of the Peace; and many big towns, including even Manchester, remained without corporate government even after the Municipal Corporations Act had become law.

Nevertheless, we are right in celebrating in 1935 the centenary of modern Local Government. For the equipment of most substantial towns with elected Councils, chosen on a franchise wide enough to represent the middle-class citizens who had won parliamentary rights three years before, provided Great Britain with foundations upon which the modern system of Local Government could be built up. The old unreformed corporations of the "rotten" boroughs had usually not regarded it as their function to govern the town in respect of the increasing number of social services which the growth of population and the development of industry were making indispensable. Narrow and exclusive, and concerned far more with their privileges than with their duties, these largely self-elected bodies preferred to allow new institutions to be created for these purposes, while they continued to spend the corporate revenue of the cities upon junketing and in even less desirable ways. A few corporations had been enlightened and progressive even under the old system; but emphatically most had not.

The loss, however, of their old powers in parliamentary elections—a most fruitful source of corruption—made a great difference; and when once the cities were given elected bodies chosen on a franchise not unlike that of the Reformed Parliament, it became natural that, as the necessity for local government services grew, the new corporations should assume control over them, in preference to letting them be handed over to *ad hoc* bodies of commissioners. Gradually the functions of these *ad hoc* bodies were taken over, and as new services were required in the field of public health, the corporations assumed those also. They became Local Boards of Health under the Public Health Act of 1848, and ultimately Urban Sanitary Districts under the Acts of 1872 and 1875. It is, however, notable that when at last, after 1870, the State began to make elementary education definitely a public service, the idea of concentrating all the functions of local government in the hands of a single authority was still so little developed that separate School Attendance Committees and School Boards were created side by side with the municipal corporations.

The counties had to wait until 1888 before they too were given their charter of self-government; while Parish Councils came six years later, in 1894. Long before that, cities such as Manchester had bought out their old manorial rulers and become fully self-governing; and in 1888 the larger cities became technically counties as well as cities, and were made, as County Boroughs, wholly independent of the counties to which they belonged in a geographical sense. The country was divided, administratively, between Counties and County Boroughs, with Municipal Boroughs and Urban and Rural Districts (and after 1894 Parish Councils also) as smaller units within the counties. With these bodies and with the London County Council, formed in 1888 to supersede the older federal Metropolitan Board of Works, the country had a system of local governing institutions to which it was possible to entrust the working of the rapidly growing group of services needing to be publicly administered and controlled.

These institutions were—and still are to-day—of very uneven strength. Except in the mining areas and a few highly industrialised districts, county self-government has never been nearly so much a democratic reality as self-government in the towns. It is difficult for working people to serve on County Councils, because of the distances that have to be travelled to get to meetings, and the fact that no payment even of expenses can be made; and it is difficult to infuse much reality into the elections in the majority of areas. The taking over of educational functions under the Act of 1902 did not alter this situation; and even the absorption of the Boards of Guardians and the great accumulation of new duties that has come upon the local governing authorities in recent years have hardly altered it to-day. It is far harder, even now, to make rural than to make urban self-government a reality. The town has usually in some degree a consciousness of the common problems and an organised confrontation of rival opinions about the best way of meeting them. The country—or at any rate the county—still very often lacks both these requisites of successful self-government.

To a great extent, the history of English Local Government over the past century is the record of the growth of two groups of services—public health and education. Public assistance—the third great group—has been of much less importance in local government history because it was kept isolated, until recently, under the separate Boards of Guardians, and also because the modern services of Health and Unemployment Insurance have been developed under central and not local control. Public Health, again, has been, far more than Education, the nucleus round which the local government system has been built up, both because the State entered only very late and very reluctantly into the educational field and because religious controversies over education long prevented the development of a civic attitude. Modern institutions of Local Government are to a great extent public health institutions writ large. Municipal trading, about which there have been so many controversies since the Socialist movement began to develop in the 'eighties, has been largely an offshoot and extension of public health services. From drains and water supply the step is easy to the provision of gas and electricity and even to local transport.

Only in our own times has housing, another obvious extension of the service of Public Health, come to rank among the foremost activities of Local Government. Public housing began, in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, with the Cross and Torrens Acts dealing with the supervision of buildings from the standpoint of health and sanitation and the provision of working-class lodging houses. Not till 1890 was the first major Act passed for the housing of the working classes; and not till John Burns's Act of 1909 did the Local Authorities acquire even the most rudimentary Town Planning powers. It needed the war, with the arrest of private building and the sharp rise in building costs which it caused, to bring the State fully into the field with the subsidising of the Local Authorities for the provision of working-class houses—to such purpose that their public debt in respect of housing amounted in 1931 to no less than £473 millions, out of a total municipal debt—more than offset by municipal assets of £1,215 millions.

As compared with a century ago, local government functions have been broadened almost beyond recognition. It is not possible to say how much was being spent on locally provided services in 1835; but even in comparison with sixty years ago, the development has been immense. For England and Wales, Local Government expenditure, apart from loans, came to less than £29 millions in 1873, and to nearly £433 millions in 1930.

Out of this, Government grants accounted for under £2½ millions in 1873, and over £137 millions in 1930. Loan expenditure was £8 millions in 1873, and nearly £111 millions in 1930. The growth of central grants in aid of local services is wholly modern. It is based on the recognition that local rates on property are an unfair and burdensome charge, and that it would be quite out of the question to finance out of the rates the great range of essentially national services, such as health and education, which call for local administration within the requirements of a national minimum standard of efficiency.

Local government methods and institutions have changed out of all recognition since 1835. But a great deal remains to be done. Modern economic developments are rendering most municipal and even county areas far too small for the successful administra-

on of a growing range of services; and there is a danger that, unless authorities capable of acting over wider areas can be built up, more and more functions may be taken away from the local authorities and transferred to central management. The sprawling suburbs spread far beyond the municipal jurisdiction of the towns to which they belong; but the mere extension of municipal boundaries to include them only serves to rob the counties of rateable values without which they cannot meet the necessary costs of services in the rural and lesser urban areas. Some sort of regional self-government is urgently needed if we are to be saved from a rapid encroachment of the Central authority upon the sphere of Local Government. But will Regional Government work unless there can be built up behind it a regional consciousness like the civic consciousness which has been at the back of the major achievements of urban self-government during the past century?

This problem, and others like it, will not be easily solved. But they must be solved, at least in part, if England is to become in fact—what it is already in form—a democratically governed country. For Local Government is not only indispensable as a means of providing services adjusted to local needs. It is also an invaluable training-ground for those who come to occupy positions of national authority. The Reformers of a hundred years ago built better than they knew. Edwin Chadwick and his collaborators, when they produced that unsurpassed series of Blue Books which gave nearly a century ago the first effective survey of the condition of the British people, laid foundations, on principles which they derived above all from Jeremy Bentham, for the modern structure of public local provision for urgent social needs. In exposing the insanitary houses of the old and new towns and of the impoverished villages, they forced an unduly complacent middle class ultimately to face the facts. The repeated epidemics of cholera helped; and it has been claimed, not without truth, that the cholera, by frightening the rich, did more to create local government institutions than Chadwick could have done with all his persevering industry. But if that is true, it is also true that, but for Chadwick, Parliament would have lacked the necessary data for tackling the problem; and it is fair to couple with the centenary of the Municipal Corporations Act the names of that quarrelsome, pertinacious individualist, Edwin Chadwick who, firm believer in *laissez faire*, did more than any other man to further State intervention, and of his chief inspirer, Jeremy Bentham, who taught men to value "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" as the guiding principle of sound political activity. G. D. H. COLE

# A LONDON DIARY

SUNDAY'S thunderstorm provided atmospherics that seriously interfered with the reception of Radio Luxembourg in this country. To me this was no tragedy. But then I am not one of that apparently large section of the population which spends its Sundays listening to advertisements. They now have the chance of listening from early morning to darkest night, beginning, according to last Sunday's programme, with Rowntree's concert after breakfast and ending with dance music from 10.30 to midnight designed to encourage the consumption of Bile Beans. If they are real fans they will also have heard in the course of a stiff sixteen-hour day a revue put on by Edison Swan Electric, music advertising Hall's Wine, Zambuk, Littlewoods (the famous bookmakers in Liverpool), and an hour's programme provided by the British and Dominions Film Corporation Ltd. If they are not always loyal to Luxembourg and choose the right moments on other days of the week, they can fill in odd hours under the guidance of Phillips' Dental Magnesia, Ballito Stockings, Kraft Cheese, Betox Gravy, Karmoid, Ingersoll, Horlick's remedy against "night starvation" (this slogan was surely a stroke of genius), Woodward's Gripe Water for babies, Socapool (pronounced socker and referring, I'm told, to a method of losing money by guessing at football winners), Maclean's tooth paste—indeed, there is scarcely a branded trade-mark known to an already deafened population which will not tell us all about itself and give us a period of from a quarter of an hour to an hour and a half's usually very indifferent entertainment on the radio. The results, I gather, are remarkable. Thirty thousand requests for a sample or booklet offered would be a quite normal response to a Luxembourg broadcast—which makes the £250–£400 charged for "time" a cheap proposition. One firm, I'm told, has a special staff of 160 people answering the replies to its broadcast offers. I doubt whether this form of advertising touches the educated classes much, and I cannot help feeling glad that the Newspaper Proprietors' Association is too much interested in newspaper advertising to permit Luxembourg any publicity in the British press. I am still more glad that in this country we have avoided the curse of advertising through the B.B.C.

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There is a symbolic fitness in the fact that Henri Barbusse died in Moscow. For Barbusse in spirit belonged to the Workers' Republic rather than to bourgeois France. The nationalist pretensions of France or indeed of any other country had become, as a result of his experiences in the war, an insufferable stench in his nostrils. He applied at once for active service in August, 1914, was at the Aisne front by December, and was twenty-three months a private. He became a fervent believer in human equality and remained till his death passionately faithful to the convictions which he formed in the trenches and expressed in *Le Feu*. His was the first of the great war-books; it was an epic of the Unknown Soldier written in 1916 while it was still dangerous to be a pacifist and before it was fashionable to erect war memorials. "When all men have made themselves equal," says one of his soldier heroes to another, "we shall be forced to unite." "And there'll no longer be appalling things done in the face of Heaven by thirty million men who didn't wish them," is the other's response. The real enemies, he insisted, were not the Germans, but the profiteers and financiers, the intellectual apologists for capitalism, the parsons, the lawyers, the economists and historians. The betrayal of the soldier at Versailles completed his conversion to internationalism and pacifism, and this faith inspired all his books whether directly political or not. When I made his acquaintance, he was an impressive person to meet, gaunt, fanatical and nevertheless wonderfully attractive; he was devoting his immense energy to organising with a surprising amount of success a war-resistance movement in the villages of France. He played, in his last years, an important part in building the union of the Left in France which is one of the few hopeful features of Europe in 1935.

* * *

I doubt if Lady Haig herself would claim that the public is being deprived of anything very valuable by the court's injunction on *The Man I Knew*. She explains that she and her husband had gone over all his voluminous diaries and letters and that she was only prevented from publishing them in full by the objections of her fellow-trustees. I understand that she was persuaded against her own judgment during a long illness to agree to Mr. Duff Cooper's having access to these documents for his biography of Lord Haig and that *The Man I Knew*, which was mainly a paraphrase of the documents she would not publish, was intended as an appetiser which would lead to a demand for the publication of the whole Haig Diaries. Such an appetiser has not much va ue in itself. We already know about the friction between Haig and Lloyd George, and unless we are given Haig's strategic arguments for wanting to mass the whole British man-power on the Western Front, to record the fact that he protested on such and such a date or that he received such and such an honour or thought himself inadequately appreciated in such and such a quarter, is likely to damage rather than enhance his reputation. What we want is to know the serious consideration which he must have put forward for his own policy; without the full documents we cannot know if there is any effective reply to Mr. Lloyd George's ferocious attack.

Recently at Clerkenwell police court a man was sentenced to three months hard labour for "stealing as bailee a Singer sewing machine, value £18 18*s*." He was twenty-one years of age and had committed a similar crime previously when he was only nineteen, and legally an infant. The evidence showed that he was unemployed and was living with a girl by whom he had a young baby. He obtained £4 for the machine (which he was buying by instalments) in order, he said, to pay for food and arrears of rent. Such cases are very common. Poverty-stricken people are constantly sent to prison for selling machines, wireless sets or bicycles, which they have not completely paid for, and which clearly in many cases should never have been sold to them. These hire purchase agreements usually differ from the other weekly payment transactions in that the goods remain the property of the supplying firm until the last instalment has been paid. The customer signs an undertaking not to pawn, sell or dispose of them until the full price is cleared off. If he falls into arrears with his payments the firm has the right to take back the goods and to treat all the payments, even if the article is nearly paid for, as hire rent for the use of the articles. They may make an allowance, but this is by no means the rule. If the customer terminates the transaction and surrenders the goods, he undertakes to pay for depreciation a sum which varies between 30 per cent. and 50 per cent. of the total hire purchase price. The firm's final safeguard is that if the customer sells the goods he has partly or almost made his own he is not only civilly liable but can be charged with theft.

* * *

If I were the magistrate trying such a case I think I should feel inclined to comment less on the depravity of the thief than on the evils that naturally follow from such a form of business. Clearly the inquiry made by the firm is often quite inadequate and equally clearly the temptation put in the way of feckless people is much too great. The investigation into the credentials of the hire purchaser is commonly carried out by an "inquiry agent" who is paid 1*s* to 1*s*. 6*d*. for each house he calls at. This inquiry is naturally perfunctory. It needs no great effort of imagination to see that the result will often be disastrous. Take the case of a young man who is in work when he signs the agreement and may have nearly paid for an article which is far more valuable than anything else in his possession. He finds he cannot continue payment and cannot get his money back. If it is a crime to sell what is not yet quite his own but which may represent all his savings and capital, it is a crime into which most of us, I think, might easily fall.

* * *

An interesting sidelight on the reading public comes from publishers who tell me that the sale of a novel depends to an increasing extent on the brilliancy and attraction of the picture on the jacket. For the colonial public in particular bright jackets are essential; one publisher reports that he has had an order from Australia "for all his recent novels, except those without coloured jackets." Another has anticipated this demand by having brilliant jackets with pictures, preferably of luscious women, specially printed for even quite good novels which, one would have thought, like good wine, needed no bush. Which leads one to inquire whether *The Health, Wealth, and Happiness of Mankind* would have sold ever better if the cover had shown a picture of a modern woman in her underclothes, or whether you could recreate Dante's *Inferno* as a best seller by the simple process of covering the volume with a thoroughly realistic representation of the tortures of women who had broken the Seventh Commandment.

* * *

I have been thinking about speed. Speed on the road may be governed ultimately by the law, but is actually determined by professional tradition and etiquette. No one ever met a butcher's pony going at less than a canter in the old days, or a fast milk cart. To-day, speed is the trade prerogative of the newspaper van and the mail van, and would be altogether indecent in a hearse. So at least I thought until I saw this week a hearse doing a smooth 45 up a London street. An old gentleman crossing the road had the same delusion and the hearse (which contained a coffin and the usual top-hatted mutes) pulled up squealing only just in time. At which another breach of professional etiquette occurred. The four undertakers, hitherto grave in the hearse-side manner, suddenly showed their teeth and laughed with the peculiarly sardonic laughter of undertakers, a laughter all the more disturbing since they were on duty and had so narrowly escaped another job of work. Passers-by laughed too. Very gaily. I reflected that many people would like their death to be the occasion of gaiety in others. The old gentleman who had escaped, however, was very angry.

CRITIC

## THIS ENGLAND

**Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. C. K. Brown.**

**All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.**

Priest-in-Charge wanted for St. Mary's, Ash Vale. Catholic essential. Fast bowler preferred.—*Church Times.*

This being so, the provision, that a certain part of any such supplementary non-contractual remuneration should increase for the future the fixed contractual minimum, was from the point of view of the Buyer a really valuable set-off to the fact that, in order to get the Buyership at all, he had to accept terms of tenure that would make it very difficult for him to take off to some competitor of the Partnership the knowledge that he would never get unless we appointed him to this Buyership.—*Partnership Gazette.*

It was rather nice to think that this year the partridges had a lovely restful Sunday on the First of September.—*Western Mail & South Wales News.*

Be "At Home" in the Army.—*Recruiting Poster.*

I TRY THE ARMY'S NEW GUN. IT'S LOVELY.—*Sunday Dispatch.*

Over the whole of this Abyssinian dispute rises the stink of oil and stronger than even the stink of oil is the stink of the Jews.—Sir Oswald Mosley.

Lady Alice Scott . . . She is slim, petite, fair-haired.—*Daily Mail*, Aug. 31.

Her brown eyes can light vivaciously—*Daily Mail*, Aug. 31.

Her dark bobbed hair blew in the breeze.—*Daily Mail*, Aug. 31.

Is petite, blue-eyed.—*Daily Mail*, Aug. 30.

Juno writes: Why doesn't "Ubique" teach her children a prayer in Greek? God would still understand and it would be an excellent beginning for a classical education.—Letter in *Nursery World.*

## THE ANTI-FASCIST MOVEMENT IN FRANCE

ON February 6th, 1934, the day of the Fascist revolt in Paris, some of us went to trade union headquarters in the Rue Lafayette to help to protect it against a possible Fascist aggression. There we were altogether hardly a dozen people with sticks and a couple of revolvers; that night a Fascist attack would certainly have succeeded. What we found there was typical of the lack of preparedness of workers' organisations in face of the growing agitation of the reactionary Leagues in the beginning of 1934.

On February 6th, 1935, a repetition of the Fascist aggression was to be expected. This time, in more than a hundred places all over Paris members of all the organisations that stand for the defence of liberty were assembled. Through

the greater part of the night they waited in readiness for the alarm. There was a sectional headquarters from which there was constant communication with the local groups and from which motor-cyclists were sent to the critical points of the city and the places where Fascist meetings were held.

This gives an indication of the progress in organisation which has been made in France during the last eighteen months under the pressure of the Fascist menace.

* * *

During the General Election campaign of 1932, Socialist election meetings were regularly invaded by Communists who rushed the platform, turned the Socialist leaders out and delivered their own election speeches to those assembled.

At the municipal elections in May, 1935, almost everywhere Socialists and Communists withdrew their candidates in the second ballot respectively in favour of the one who had got most votes in the first ballot. Moreover, local anti-Fascist committees, comprising all organisations opposed to Fascism, intervened in favour of the most popular anti-Fascist candidate in order that in the second ballot he might get the votes also of others besides Socialists and Communists. Thus in one of the populous quarters in the South of Paris, we, as the Executive of the local anti-Fascist committee, met the local radical (Liberal) committee and persuaded them to withdraw their candidate in favour of the Communist who had obtained most votes in the first ballot but was in danger of being defeated by a Fascist. Thus the Communist was elected against the Fascist. It was this kind of intervention of the all-inclusive anti-Fascist committees that assured the election of Professor Rivet in the Quartier Latin and of many other candidates of the Left.

From that we can see what progress has been achieved lately as regards unity in the political action against Fascism.

* * *

On February 6th, 1934, when the Fascists tried to fight their way from the Place de la Concorde across the Seine bridge to the Chambre des Députés, the resistance of the Paris police was extremely weak, and without the intervention of the Gardes Mobiles, a police army for special service, the French Constitution would then have been overthrown. The Paris police were then still under the influence of their chief, M. Chiappe, who had been dismissed only a few days before. Wherever meetings of the Left took place, the Paris police intervened very brutally on the slightest pretext. Socialists and Communists, on the other hand, considered the police their special enemies and fought them wherever they could. A particular example of this occurred on May 1st, 1934, in the Cité Jeanne d'Arc, a block of slum houses in the working-class district of the 13th arrondissement of Paris.

On July 14th, 1935, some 500,000 people took part in the big demonstration at the Bastille to protest against the fascisation of France. Local groups, even from far away suburbs, marched long distances to take part in the demonstration. One such group encountered on its way a local police commissaire, a certain Monsieur Marinot, who protested against the breach of the law which forbids all marching of groups through the streets. Whilst the commissaire was arguing with the leaders of the procession, he was greeted with the cry: "Marinot with us." And as the whole body moved on, he thus marched at the head of the procession, all the time arguing, to the loud acclamations of the crowd, until they had passed through the area of his municipality. Similarly, when the State officials and employees demonstrated against the Government policy of deflation, on August 8th at the Place de l'Opéra, in the heart of Paris, and this in spite of an express police order forbidding all demonstrations, the demonstrators greeted the police everywhere with the cry: "The police with us" and the police were extremely friendly.

These are some examples of the very characteristic change that has recently taken place in Paris in the relations between the Left and the police.

* * *

These three things: progress in organisation of the resistance to Fascism, progress in unity between Left groups, improvement of the relations between the Left and the police, are important factors in the movement against Fascism, factors in favour of the possibility of preventing Fascism getting into power in France.

However, organisation is not perfect, unity is not complete and police animosity under the influence of pro-Fascist chiefs (as in the case of Brest and Toulon) is not excluded. Moreover —and this is far more important—there is as yet no agreement between the anti-Fascist organisations, as to a *positive programme* which they can advocate in common—either as a programme of a Government of the "Popular Front" which is thought probable by many Left wingers, or as an opposition platform. This absence of a positive programme is more and more felt as a serious drawback: Many people who were beginning to take a sympathetic interest in the anti-Fascist movement, peasants, shopkeepers and others, are impatiently asking what this movement wants to do over and above simple defence against Fascism. To this question there is as yet no reply, largely because of the lack of willingness of some of the big organisations to come to an understanding with the others on certain points of their special party programme. Unity in defence action is far from having developed into unity in planning and constructive action. Shall we be able to overcome the obstacles to this larger unity? The next months will show. If yes, the future of a freer and juster France may be assured; if no, Fascism may easily become the inheritor of our influence on the masses—and this owing to our incapacity.

FRANÇOIS GIRARD

Paris.

# LOVE OF BIRDS

WHEN I saw the heading "Prospects for Partridges" in a newspaper, I could not help reading the article beneath it. I have for a long time taken an intermittent interest in birds, and have wished them well, from the raven down to the house-sparrow. It gives me pleasure to know that the prospects for goldfinches and other families of birds have greatly improved during my own lifetime, and I turned to the article on partridges hoping that the latest news about them was equally good.

The writer of the article was obviously devoted to partridges. All through the spring and summer he has been making anxious inquiries about their welfare, their health, and the size of their families. He is as much in favour of large and happy families as Mussolini. When he hears that the little creatures have deen damaged by drought or rain he is deeply concerned. There is a note of despondency in his voice when he reports that at Thetford "some of the young broods suffered damage from the wet just after hatching." Again he tells us with regret that in the Andover district "the coveys are very small and a number of barren pairs are reported." He writes more cheerfully of Cumberland where "there is an average of about eight to each covey, and the birds are well forward." And the news from Norfolk is better still. "The well-known beats in Norfolk," he tells us, "were expecting a good season by the middle of July, which is generally considered to be the critical time for partridges." Many people, ignorant of the facts of bird-life, have always assumed that the critical time for partridges begins on September 1. Those who love partridges enough to take a real interest in them, however, know that the crisis occurs earlier. How good it is to learn that the Norfolk partridges have come through it so safely this summer.

Foreigners are sometimes inclined to think that the English are over-sentimental about animals. They do not understand the Englishman's objection to the use of dogs for traction purposes, or to his dislike of seeing song-birds shot for food. I doubt whether they could understand the point of view of a race that has constituted itself into what might be called a Partridge Welfare Society—a race to whom the health and nurture of partridges are really important things. The Englishman, however, cannot help his nature. Sentimental or not, he has

always been an eager protector of birds. Consider how he has hated poaching. He pays large salaries to game-keepers in order to make sure that birds shall not suffer at the hands of base-born fellows without the common instincts of humanity. From the time of Richard II till about a hundred years ago, he forbade anyone to kill game "unless qualified by estate or social standing, a qualification raised from a 40*s.* freehold in 1389 to an interest of £100 a year in freehold or £150 in long leaseholds (1673)." This, at least, gave birds the satisfaction of knowing that, if they were killed, they would be killed by gentlemen; and it also greatly reduced the number of bird-killers. I cannot make out why it was ever repealed. The Englishman also took steps to protect birds by a law that no one must kill grouse or pheasants or partridges on Sundays or Christmas Day. Then there is the close season. Cynics may make light of the motives of sportsmen; but the fact remains that, during more than half the year, all is done that can be done to secure that no British partridge, grouse, or pheasant shall meet its death at the hands of violent men.

It may be objected to the humanitarian interpretation of the law that, though the partridge, the pheasant and the grouse were protected in this way, there was no official close season for the rook and the sparrow, and that the enslavement of the goldfinch and the chaffinch in cages was not forbidden until quite recently. The answer to this is that every reform has to begin somewhere, and that the Englishman, having determined to enforce kindness to birds, naturally began with the birds that had served him best—the birds that had saved him, if not from starvation, at least from the monotony of a purely farmyard diet. The aristocracy has often been criticised, and justly, but it must always be remembered that it was aristocratic Parliaments that passed most of the laws protecting game-birds. If rook-pie and sparrow-pie had been as common on aristocratic as on poor tables I feel sure that the lives of the rook and the sparrow would also have been protected by a grateful legislature. The English sportsman cannot do too much for a bird of which he likes the taste. Who does not remember the mighty efforts he made to defend the native partridge against an invasion of enemy partridges from the Continent? Till the end of the eighteenth century there had been one species of partridge in England—*Perdix perdix*, or, as those who wish to be absolutely accurate call it, *Perdix perdix perdix*. During the reign of King George III, however, whether through treachery or stupidity the red-legged partridge—*Caccabis rufa*—was introduced into England. It multiplied and spread like the little owl and the grey squirrel. Sportsmen became alarmed lest the foreign bird should gradually oust the native species, and, in a fury of patriotism, in the words of T. A. Coward, "strove to wipe it out." They failed, and the bird is still with us, but sportsmen are apparently not yet reconciled to it. The trouble is that it is a bird lacking in the finer sporting instincts. It is reluctant to rise and let itself be shot at. As one authority writes: "It has certainly the habit of trusting nearly as much to its legs as to its wings, and this incurred the obloquy of old-fashioned sportsmen, whose dogs it vexatiously kept at a running point." Is it any wonder that the bird is sometimes treated, not as an honest English bird, but as a nuisance?

It has often been a matter of surprise to me that the Englishman, with all his love of game birds, has never celebrated them in perfect song. I can recall no ode to a partridge comparable with Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale." There has been no poet to hail the grouse as ecstatically as Shelley hailed the skylark. Mr. de la Mare has never been moved by the flying colours of the pheasant as he has been moved by the song of the wren. This seems curious, for Englishmen will go to far greater trouble to get sight of a partridge or pheasant or grouse than to hear the song of a lark, or a wren, or a nightingale. You do not hear of Englishmen setting out in train-loads to Scotland merely to listen to birds that the poets have written about; nor do you hear of train-loads of Scotsmen, inhabitants of a land without nightingales, paying enormous railway fares in order to be among the nightingales in southern England. In his enthusiastic love of birds, the sportsman is without a rival. It may be that love so extreme as his is something above the reach of poetry. The things that men love with the most fatal passion—golf and tobacco, for example—are, perhaps, so satisfying in themselves that they have no need of being celebrated in great verse. Most love poetry after all, springs from dissatisfaction, longing, desire for the unattained. The golfer and the smoker know little of this divine dissatisfaction. And it is the same with the sportsman. He knows the exact date in the year at which he will be sure of finding the time and the place and the loved one all together. He loves birds, but not hopelessly. He bides his time, praying that in the meanwhile all will be well with them.

This year, apparently, all is fairly well with them. The prospects for partridges are said to be average. Let us hope that the partridge will show their gratitude to those who have protected them from their enemies during the critical period of their lives. The partridge may not be as deeply indebted to man's loving care as the pheasant, but all game-birds owe much to their protectors, who, like certain European governments, encourage large and robust families on much the same lines. An ungrateful partridge here and there may object: "You bring me up so lovingly only in order that I may be a mark for guns." But the human child in an expansionist State might as reasonably refuse gratitude for all the care that has been lavished on him. The human child, indeed, has a better cause for complaining, because, when he is killed, he will not even be eatable—not, at least, till decivilisation has progressed some way further. The prospects for partridges may be only average, but the prospects for children are not even so good as that. There is much to be said for the life of a partridge.

Y. Y.

# Correspondence

## LABOUR AND WAR

SIR,—The danger of war in Abyssinia raises the important question of the attitude of the Socialist and Trades Union movement. Mr. Lansbury's recent declaration in favour of sanctions against Italy can hardly fill the intelligent Socialist with much hope.

In 1914 this country went to war to protect "poor little Belgium," and large sections of the Labour and Socialist movement gave their support to that war. It was only subsequently that everyone realised that "poor little Belgium" had very little to do with it. Is not the situation to-day very similar, and are we not soon to be invoked to "Save Abyssinia"? Socialists have, of course, a certain amount of sympathy for Abyssinia; above all, we have no desire to see Fascism of either the German or the Italian variety extend its territory, but neither of these points should blind us to the fact that if sanctions are invoked against Italy, and those sanctions lead, as they surely will, to war, that war will merely be a battle between colonisers who have been and colonisers who want to be.

The Labour Party and the Communist International, who seem to agree on the issue, may succeed in demonstrating to their followers the theoretical correctness of their policy. They will never, if they support this war, succeed in persuading the mass of the working class that there is between a Socialist and Capitalist that essential difference that exists between order and chaos. If they give the support of the Labour movement to the policy of sanctions, then if it is necessary to enforce these sanctions they must give support to a policy of war. The place of Labour and Communist leaders will then be, not in the revolutionary struggle but on the recruiting platform. Robert Blatchford supported the last war because it was a different war from all others. Are George Lansbury and Harry Pollitt to support this because it is different?

This war we shall be told is a just war. A reading of history should convince anyone that every war since the World began has been just. Superficially we always fight for honour, justice or some other abstraction. Actually the war is usually for something

more concrete. Organised Labour must not be carried away by talk of "Save Abyssinia," as it was by the cry of "poor little Belgium." The Labour and Socialist movement must offer at all times uncompromising resistance to any war fought under capitalism.

Its only actions in the case of an outbreak of war should be directed to turning that war into a civil war. G. J. CORBISHLEY

## PEACEFUL CHANGE

SIR,—Sir Leo Chiozza Money asks us to present Italy and Germany with colonies—in failing to do so we are condemning "great peoples to unmerited poverty." *Rubbish.*

Both Italy and Germany are still largely agricultural countries, and with good organisation could be almost self-supporting as regards food supplies. The peoples of the Fascist countries are being condemned to unmerited poverty by their own landlords and capitalists who refuse to pay their workers enough wages to enable them to purchase the wealth they are capable of producing.

It is true that the possession of an Empire has enabled Britain to weather the economic storm slightly better than the Fascist countries; but what does the advantage amount to for the masses of Britain? It means that the 2,000,000 unemployed receive a slightly higher dole and endure a less stringent means test than the unemployed of Central Europe.

The very small colonial concessions which might be made to the Fascist powers would not make any perceptible difference to the lot of the people living under Fascist tyranny.

4 Cambridge Road, GORDON HOSKING
New Malden, Surrey.

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SIR,—Sir L. Money refers to the fact that Germany and Italy with a population of 108 millions are living and working on a mere 300,000 square miles. Now if the mere increase in population is to be a justification for an expansion into countries which are either backward or thinly populated, India and China would have probably the best claims for a mandate in Australia or the U.S.A. If a country not only does not keep down, but deliberately tries to increase its population by suppression of all propaganda regarding birth control, and then on the strength of that population pressure demands more space for expansion, the vicious circle will never end. The only solution appears to be for countries to limit their population with due regard to their resources. If at all Great Britain would like to afford some "Lebensraum" to countries which are over-populated, there is India, a member of the Great Empire which could be helped. But, of course, room for expansion is required only by white people and not by the coloured! D. D. KARVÈ

69-1 Yerandawna, Poona-4.

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SIR,—What really is Comdr. Stephen King-Hall's grievance as regards foreigners' "access to raw materials"? Who is preventing this access? Do not foreigners buy all the raw materials they require from our Colonies on the same terms as ourselves?

Has the Commander never heard of the Board of Trade which is constantly making and revising "access" on an equitable basis? On most of these "black pacts" we come off second best, as he will see from a glance at the figures of the leading trading nations.

Have Germany and Italy, who already block our "access" to trade with every conceivable contrivance, to have some privileged access to our Colonies? As regards the Suez Canal, the present rule is "freedom for all." Where is the grievance? Our genial Commander, so sensible on the wireless, is evidently looking for trouble and he won't be long in finding it.

40 YEARS AN EXPORTER

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SIR,—Whatever may be the outcome of the present crisis, there can be no peace in the world unless Great Britain is prepared to make some concessions of Colonial territory. Surely we need not wait for other people.

There is something comical about the highly moral attitude of this country. Having taken possession of a large part of the earth by force of arms, we think it is time the nations left off fighting and began to act like reasonable beings. We expect other countries to join with us in maintaining the present arrangements, but are surprised and indignant because Mussolini fails to appreciate the joke.

It is useless to call upon the churches to pray for peace as long as we continue to exploit backward races, even if we think it is for their good. An honest determination to change our policy might even now prevent war. The isolationist's alternative of huge rearmament and general war is too terrible to contemplate.

Finchley Unitarian Church, BASIL MARTIN
23 Chislehurst Avenue, N.12.

## EVERY MAN HIS DUTY

SIR,—The sun is hot, the sea blue and clear; the nights are warm. I'm happy and contented, I've no personal obligations and I've money enough to prolong my stay in the South as long as I like. I don't see any misery around me and the evils of the world have become indistinct. But the newspapers filter slowly through to me and then from a distance I think of war.

There is no shock in the imminence of war, but resentment rather that yet again the uncomfortable personal problem should force itself upon me. Shall I fight if the war comes and for whom shall I fight? I have no experience of war and so the hardships are a challenge and the machine guns and poison gas something that ought to be experienced. But bayonets, fever, dysentery and skin diseases make me feel sick and at heart I am a coward.

If I adopted the position of a conscientious objector I should be a hypocrite. Human life is not "sacred" to me. I would gladly assassinate one or two dictators and a number of less publicised nuisances whose removal would be an almost unmitigated gain. Nor can I bury my head in the sands of pacifism. There are several causes for which or against which I would fight and write off the cost with no remorse. Race prejudice is one.

But the war will not be a clear-cut issue. If confined to Italy and Abyssinia, the issue, I suppose, is clear enough. No rationalisations about slavery and caste domination can hide the blatant injustice of Italy's attack. Nor is it possible with a clear conscience to argue that the mass of the inhabitants of Abyssinia may be better off under Italian rule than under their present rulers. Nevertheless I shall not fight. Although I loathe patriotism and detest blind loyalty to the country in which one happens to have been born, and although I feel no specific extra obligations to England, nevertheless I should use the alibi of English nationality and quietly continue my peaceful life in the sun. That admission, I am afraid, measures my sincerity.

If the war is not confined to Italy and Abyssinia, then England will be involved and English nationality will no longer provide a coward's excuse for doing nothing. Ostensibly, sanctions will be applied on behalf of justice and in defence of collective security. In that case we shall be fighting for the weak against the strong, for an ideal against brute force. Or so we shall be told. The call to arms will be on a moral issue. The real issue is the strategy of Empire defence, the all-red route from Cairo to the Cape. So much is clear. It would be fantastic to suppose that the present British Government would endanger the *status quo* in Europe for the sake of saving the League of Nation's face. But then what? Although the moral issue is a façade, it nevertheless exists, and perhaps I would be justified in using this as an excuse and joining a British Expeditionary force to maintain the independence of Abyssinia. It would be fairly easy to shut my eyes and stop my mind from facing the probability that the British Expeditionary force would stay in Abyssinia to maintain order and would go on staying there until the mapmakers filled out that bulge in the red band from Cairo to the Cape. The solution, I suppose, is to fight in the Abyssinian army, but that means disease and slowly festering wounds and dirt. I know that I shan't be there. Unless conscription forces me to devise more intricate rationalisations, you will find me busy at some useful and laudable task—Red Cross, education, civil liberty. It would be more honest to stay here in the sun. GUTLESS

The Riviera.

## "BEARDS IN AMERICA"

SIR,—As the successful bearer of a beard (of modest proportions) through a year in the University of Princeton, I feel bound to enter a protest against the slanders upon American courtesy implied in Mr. Ernest Boyd's article under this title in your issue of August 31st. Before I set sail for America I was warned, and I was warned again by people I met soon after my arrival, that my beard would make life intolerable: that men would not speak to me nor women dance with me; that the civilised world would shun my society; that every time I appeared out of doors I should be shouted after by small boys and assaulted by large undergraduates; and that I should not have strength or courage to keep the offence on my face for a week. I can only say that

these prognostications proved to be utterly groundless. True, my room-mate in the Graduate College told me that he had been offered considerable sums to shave me in my sleep, but I am sure the offer was made in the confidence that it would be rejected; true also, my one brief appearance on the campus of a famous women's college was celebrated afterwards in the college magazine in some verses beginning: "There was a young man with a beard"—but undergraduate editors are notoriously liable to be gravelled for matter; finally, on one occasion, in the East side of New York, my appearance was audibly remarked on by a small boy of the neighbourhood, but then this has also been known to happen in London. These, sir, are trifles which can annoy no one; and they represent the extreme limits of the inconvenience to which my eccentricity ever subjected me. In the serious matters of human intercourse, I can assure you I found myself at no disadvantage; and I easily formed at least as many and as good friends, of both sexes, as one could hope to do in the same time in an English university town.

I should consider myself grossly lacking in gratitude, and in sense of justice, if I failed to maintain against Mr. Boyd that, whatever foibles we may find to criticise or to smile at in the Americans, kindness, courtesy, and hospitality to strangers, even to those whose appearance strikes an unfamiliar note, are among the most conspicuous of their virtues. PATRICK DU VAL

Trinity College, Cambridge.

## WAR MUNITIONS

SIR,—Amongst the many private firms which manufacture war munitions there must be, in the aggregate, many tens of thousands of shareholders, all of them direct propagandists for war. Now, should the various Governments take over these shares at a fair valuation the proceeds would be invested in interest-bearing securities which in the event of war would run the risk of depreciation in capital value or even of total loss.

Thus the one-time propagandists for war would become propagandists for peace. Mr. MacDonald, when Prime Minister, was reported by the press to have said words to the following effect: "That no Government could contemplate the undertaking of the manufacturing of war munitions as the cost of providing the workshops necessary would be prohibitive."

But why contemplate such expenditure since the necessary workshops are already in existence?

32 Sion Hill, Bath. G. JONES MITTON, Colonel

## THE O.T.C.

SIR,—Your remarks about the O.T.C. certainly confirm my own experience in the Marlborough College O.T.C. between 1919 and 1922. All new boys were recruited into the O.T.C. within three weeks of their entering the School. I was never told that it was voluntary, and it never occurred to me to ask, as one was told automatically to join. I always understood that one could only be excused on medical grounds. Naturally nearly every boy was a member. I can vouch, too, for the fact that it was heartily disliked by everybody, not, I regret to say, on ethical grounds, but because of the boredom and discomfort. Certainly I can clearly remember that in those days I registered a vow that if a war should come on I would join the Air Force! NORMAN JONES

Oak Cottage, Claygate Common, Claygate.

## HOW TO PREVENT DISEASE

SIR,—The object of my letter in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of August 17th was to call attention to the fact that there is an immensely strong case against serum inoculations. I am sending you, Sir, and Dr. Roberts all the references for which he asks in his letter in reply to mine. I did not raise the general issue of the spiritual objections to vivisection, although they form a strong argument against the practice of immunisation. It is possible, no doubt, that some useful knowledge, useful from the point of view of mankind living in imperfect conditions, may be gained by vivisectionist practices. All such "knowledge," however, is likely to be suspect and should never on any account be the basis for any kind of compulsion, nor for any form of medical tyranny.

The facts I quoted in my letter destroy the theoretical foundation of the practice of antitoxin injections and also the validity of the statistics employed to justify the practice.

I do not question the good faith of doctors, but I think many of them accept the general principle of immunisation by inoculation as proven just as we scientists accept the laws of physics and chemistry. They quite candidly use this principle as an aid to diagnosis and classify illnesses so that they shall not be contrary to the patients' immunisation history. Such a procedure is clearly easy to adopt in perfect good faith with a science so empirical as medicine, but it is an alarming obstruction to progress along more humane and enduring lines.

Dr. Roberts did not deal with my questions; they are questions which a minority of doctors themselves are asking without getting satisfactory replies. The whole matter bristles with difficulties, and I think it most unwise to take on a national scale, action which may have serious consequences. The people should not be misled into the belief that a harmless and certain preventive has been discovered unless the evidence is far more conclusive than it is now.

83 Broad Lane, Hampton, Middlesex. L. W. BRYANT

## RURAL EDUCATION

SIR,—In your note on the above, may I suggest as a further consideration to those you give, that there is too great a readiness to assume that the standard of the town schools is typical of all schools?

Although there are exceptions, many of our rural schools have made but little advance during the last fifty years. For instance, here in this small village on the Yorkshire Wolds is a church school typical of the many church schools which are the sole means of elementary education in this rural area. Built, without enthusiasm, some seventy years ago, it still retains the Poor Law look of that period. If its four walls told, they would tell of generations of bored children who, entering at the age of five, share its one room with some forty other boys and girls, the divided attention of a woman teacher and a "supplementary," until the fourteenth birthday comes as a great day of deliverance.

The well-known boast that by means of the educational ladder, the child of the elementary school may ascend by means of the secondary school to the University, may be true of the towns, but never, within the history of this school, has any child gained any kind of scholarship for any secondary or other higher form of schooling. This is not due to lack of able children, or of teaching ability. The conditions simply do not allow it.

That these conditions are not inevitable is proved by the action of such education authorities as Kent, Cambridge and some other counties, where central senior schools are offering the village child as liberal a schooling as is available for the children living in the towns. There, the school age will be raised by common consent. But there seems to be no kind of pressure or even inducement on the part of the Board of Education to bring these central schools into being. Meanwhile, this church school—maintained as it is entirely by public money—is firmly entrenched, and any proposal to raise the school age under existing conditions will be regarded and justly regarded—as an additional injustice for the village child. A. W. CARTER

# Miscellany

## CLOSE QUARTERS

CLOSE QUARTERS moved to the Savoy Theatre from the Haymarket a week or so ago. It is an opportunity for reiterating that the play offers a chance of seeing memorable acting and enjoying an evening of intense emotion. Mr. Homolka and Miss Flora Robson give an almost flawless performance. I insert the "almost" from caution. I was too much engaged myself by the reality of the scenes before my eyes to judge if they were a shade too slow in their interpretation of one or two passages; they might have been. I should have, I think, to see *Close Quarters* several times before acquiring the detachment necessary for that kind of detection. Their performance is a triumph of realistic acting; and that implies that the dialogue of the play is psychologically true. You can have magnificently imaginative acting in unreal plays, but realistic acting at this pitch of excellence can only be achieved while interpreting perfectly natural dialogue; nor could the interest of a single sustained situation hold an audience as it does in Somin's play, unless that single situation had been vigorously and penetratingly imagined by the dramatist.

I am anxious to say something about the playwright first,

because in this unusual case, where there are only two actors on the stage and they make such a tremendous impression, the author's contribution is apt to seem subordinate.

"*Have* you seen Homolka and Flora Robson in *Close Quarters?*" people ask each other. They almost forget the play itself. That they should do so is a great tribute to the acting and one well deserved; but just as the performance itself is an object lesson to all actors, producers and amateurs of acting, so too, there are important things for playwrights to learn from the way the dramatist has handled and developed here his single subject.

As an old play-goer it gave me pleasure to detect in *Close Quarters* a triumph of the old technique. You know the way in which dramatists have lately thrown aside preparation; preferring to plunge the audience into an imperfectly explained situation and let them splash about till they seize the floating spar. Nor can anyone whose memories go back to the plays of the past have failed to notice that to-day the playwright favours rapid unravelment. He pulls out a thread and the *denouement* rips—like a ladder in a stocking. But in *Close Quarters* on the other hand, the situation is slowly revealed; details, later on of extreme importance, are inserted unobtrusively at the beginning of the play; and, as in the old Ibsen technique, what has happened before the play began slowly proves to be the essence of the dramatic situation before our eyes. One example of detailed preparation, which those who have seen the play will recall, is the trivial talk between Bergmann and his wife about marking their clothes. At the moment this talk passes as the over-emphasis on trifles characteristic of a man slightly and gaily lit—like Bergmann, who has come home after making a successful speech at a Communist meeting, and hearing an excellent piece of news (promotion) who is now enjoying nagging affectionately his strangely nervous wife. (Yes, there is something odd about her to-night; she seems somehow "miles away"—he feels that). Later this habit of sewing initials on their things becomes (you will remember) of utmost importance. The loss of a glove may fatally connect Bergmann with a murder which *she*, not he, has committed.

No one who has seen the play can have missed the skill with which the character of Bergmann himself is gradually revealed. At first he seems just a good-natured crude fellow, much interested in the politics of his own class movement, and making them the means for his own advancement at the same time: a man rather over-confident, not only of his wife's devotion to himself, but in his future. Why is she so worried that on his way back from the meeting, where he foolishly said that a certain Minister ought to be shot, he should have come through a particular wood? Just like a woman to fuss about a tiny risk which he had anyhow escaped! It only becomes more puzzling to him when their radio-receiver transmits the news that the Minister in question has been found shot in that wood. *We* guess now why Miss Flora Robson has appeared so strained and nervous, but as far as he is concerned he is only vaguely uneasy. That is the situation on which the first curtain falls. But during the scene two things about this couple have been gradually uncovered: that he is a man single-mindedly devoted to his causes and that man and wife are devoted to each other. In the second Act it becomes clearer and clearer to both that he is likely to be suspected of the murder. The dialogue and the art of the actors are here of the highest merit: the thickening of his bewilderment; her incomprehensible jerks and irrelevances; her inability to see *his* situation and yet her appalling anxiety about what is *not* to the point in that. The Act ends with his flinging out of the house to think things out for himself, leaving her in a state of hysteria. How admirably those two acted!

Act Three: He has visited his comrades. It is clear that they are convinced of his guilt. His danger is obvious and her confession inevitable.

The dead man had taken her out once and she had yielded to him once. He had engineered Bergmann's promotion. He had then blackmailed her into revealing the plans of the revolutionary movement. At last in desperation she had shot him. She had used her husband's gloves to avoid fingerprints; a glove they hear has been found in the wood and one of his own pair is missing. Watch Mr. Homolka's face and gestures during her confession; watch Miss Robson's face and gestures. I think you will conclude that you have never seen more truthfully pathetic acting—unless his laugh, so affectionate, so reassuring, as he leads her into the bedroom to shoot her and himself, strikes you as a greater triumph. That she should have been once unfaithful was hard for him to believe, it was so contrary to the nature of their relation, but that she should have been a traitor to his cause is far more difficult to accept. He does; he forgives. And it is a high tribute to the interpreters and the dramatist that the audience should feel that he would have forgiven her even that. But there is nothing for them after it except death together. The moment after the double shot is heard, the radio announces that the glove turns out to have been one which was dropped weeks before and has been claimed; and at the same moment a lodger on the same stair pushes Bergmann's missing glove through the door slit. Now the effect of this is to lessen the inevitability of the tragedy, to suggest that their deaths were unnecessary. The surprise is effective, but it minimises the effect of the play. It cannot, thank goodness, lessen the impression of the scenes we have already watched, but in memory it checks the total effect of the play. *Close Quarters*, is a play of situation and of situation alone; most ably handled and very finely interpreted. It is, therefore, not a play of the first order (there is no idea in it) but the acting is supremely good and the impression it makes during performance, though not in retrospect, is memorable and intense.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

# NEWS-REELS

THE news-reel is as old as the cinema itself, but for some reason it was not regarded or treated as an important feature in cinema programmes until sound came in, about six years ago. Very soon afterwards, we saw the establishment of small, intimate theatres which offered programmes consisting almost entirely of what was at least labelled "news," the rest of the show being made up with "shorts"—comedies, frequently in cartoon, or instructional pictures. The programme was to last about an hour; prices would be low; patrons were induced to get the "news-cinema" habit and to drop in at all times of the day. They were definitely encouraged to believe that the news offered in the cinemas would (by some means or other) be as up-to-the-minute as that offered in the latest editions of the afternoon and evening newspapers being sold on the streets. This was five years ago.

The first news-cinema was opened, I believe, in Manhattan. It was a success, and its success was naturally followed up very quickly. The Avenue Pavilion in Shaftesbury Avenue in the West End of London, announced itself, with lavish promises, as the first house of its kind in Europe. The novelty of the venture, the cheapness of the seats, the excellent interior *décor* of the theatre, the lack of competition, ensured an immediate and complete success. The first news-cinema soon had successors all over Europe. To-day there are probably a dozen *Cinéacs* in Paris, and a larger number in London. Within "the square mile" in the centre of the West End I can think off-hand of seven. Several of the great railway terminals in both London and Paris have their own (e.g., there are news cinemas actually in Victoria and Waterloo Stations, and another in Praed Street, near Paddington). Most of the larger provincial towns have their own.

Their success is unquestioned. They satisfy, in their fashion, a profound desire on the part of millions of people to be informed as to what is going on, to laugh gregariously at the creations of the genius of Disney, or at their new favourite Pop-Eye the Sailor, or to have a cheap siesta. (The news-

cinema, between three and five in the afternoon, is an excellent observation-chamber for the connoisseur of snores.)

These cinemas receive their material from a number of news-reel manufacturing concerns which undertake to supply news-reels in much the same way as the big news agencies supply national and provincial newspapers with news, though obviously the parallel breaks down on a number of important counts.

It was prophesied many years ago that sooner or later the importance of the news-reels as a medium for propaganda would be recognised by the vested interests of capital and conversely by the organised powers of labour and that it was only a matter of time before both would have their own news-producing organisations, each endeavouring to sell its products to those ordinary cinemas which show only ten minutes or so of news in a three-hour feature programme and each controlling chains of news-cinemas to which the unfavourably biased products of "the enemy" would be banned. In exactly the same way as the man-in-the-street to-day has the free choice of the *Daily Mail*, the *News Chronicle* or the *Daily Herald* for his tube, train or breakfast-table, and knows roughly the attitude his paper will take on every question which concerns him, directly or indirectly, he would enter a news-cinema which frankly showed films depicting (and more important, commenting upon) the news from the same angle; and if he found himself in another cinema, he would know what—from his own viewpoint—to disallow or question mentally. Those who prophesied this (and among them, I believe, was Miss C. A. Lejeune, the film critic of the *Observer*) unanimously looked forward to the time when this would happen, taking the attitude, with which I personally am in vigorous agreement, that it was impossible that news on the screen could be given absolutely impersonally and without bias, and that since an element of propaganda, conscious or unconscious (mostly quite conscious) was bound to enter into it, it was far better that this should be open and admitted. The idea that a newspaper or any other medium for transmitting information to the masses of the people can be completely objective and without bias is a fallacy which experience and common sense very quickly explode. Mr. R. D. Blumenfeld, than whom no journalist in London is shrewder or more experienced, has said that the effect of the comparatively objective nightly news-broadcast of the B.B.C. will be to lessen the distortion and manipulation which is making many of our newspapers contemptible as much from a technical as from an ethical viewpoint. Its ultimate effect, he prophesied, will be to bring back the era of journals which frankly give views rather than news.

It is important and instructive to see what has happened in this connection among the news-reel companies. It is fairly well known that British Movietone News, one of the chief news-reel companies functioning here, is virtually a subsidiary of the Rothermere group of newspapers, and that its Chairman and Director, the Hon. Esmond Harmsworth (Rothermere's son) and Sir Malcolm Campbell, conduct it in the interests of that group. Sir Malcolm, if report speaks truly, is sympathetic not merely to Fascism in general but to the Mosley brand in particular. The achievement of this concern (and often of Gaumont-British News, also a subsidiary of a large trust, the Ostrer concerns) is to provide a highly tendentious view of the news while suggesting to the average cinema-goer that he is receiving an objective, unbiased visual account of all the news that is fit to print, and that they have got away with it. The insidious effect of the weekly dose of snobbery-cum-Royalty-cum-worship of Everything-That-*Is* handed out by British Movietone is interesting to study. Miss Beryl de Querton comments impeccably on social happenings, Mr. Ward Price on foreign affairs, Sir Malcolm himself, in his own fidgety and would-be breezy manner, on all manner of things. Mr. Tom Webster, astounding man, adds his quota as Court Jester, a nice leaven of sophisticated disillusionment (which no *nice* person will take too seriously, of course, any more than they should take Beachcomber or Low seriously).

Audiences sit dumbly through these programmes. It is amazing. I defy anyone to tell me what it is an average British audience is feeling and thinking (if it does either) during the showing of a news-reel. Often their silence when an effort has been made to produce enthusiasm suggests a strong resistance to the propaganda offered them. Particularly noticeable was it during the gush of Jubilee Week, when audiences everywhere (I visited cinemas all over London, and well outside it) resisted the emotionalism and suggestion in exactly their usual manner. The treatment of recent political developments, the blatant pushing for a bigger air force indulged in by "Movietone," the pro-Hitler propaganda (shortly after Sir Malcolm took over, and in a reel commented on by himself), the virtual boycotting of the U.S.S.R. and of Labour movements in other countries—all these affect the claim of every existing news-reel company that it gives a fair abstract of the news to a bad joke. To fill up their programmes they are compelled to give interminable doses of the Berlin Zoo, of lovable Bavarians or roguish Niçois indulging in whoopee, of quaint village customs, of he-men bathing at Bondi Beach (for in Australia nothing ever happens—if we are to judge from the news-reels). This is not News.

To-day we are promised developments. Lately a new company invited subscriptions for the opening of new news-cinemas; Lord Beaverbrook is rumoured to be interested in a scheme for the creation of a chain of news-cinemas in England and on the continent, under the management of his second son, the Hon. Peter Aitken (the first of them to be opened in Park Lane).

But most interesting of all is the arrival for our cinemas of the "March of Time," a monthly news service sponsored and edited by the men who have made the American weekly, *Time*, famous for its usually accurate concentrated *news*, particularly among the members of the Fourth Estate all over the world. If this feature is as skilfully and as intelligently composed as the original magazine, and all advance reports suggest that it is, I imagine very many of our alleged news-reel companies are in for shocks. The opportunity, facing Left-wing and Liberal newspaper groups in London for years, of creating their own news-reel services and their own news-cinemas, has been missed. Lately the great weight of half-articulate resentment at the failure of the self-styled news-reel companies to fulfil their supposed function has been breaking out in a smattering of pungent and exasperated letters to the general press and to the film fan weeklies. But the great majority of the people will probably not realise what tripe, and what scandalously one-sided and flatulent tripe, they have been content with through the years until they see before their eyes something different. I pray that the "March of Time" will fill that need and give the lead to more and better real news-reel companies here.

GLYN ROBERTS

# PEG WOFFINGTON

**"Peg of Old Drury," at the Leicester Square.**

There could hardly be a part better suited to the breezy talents of Miss Anna Neagle than "bold Irish-faced" Peg Woffington of Old Drury. The Mrs. Woffington of history, the heroine of Charles Reade's Victorian novel, the title-role in Miles Malleson's scenario are all represented near enough to the life by this blooming British rosebud whom we have so assiduously nurtured into stardom. And she earns her success in the part; she is kept very busy; for she starts the film with a rumbustious little dance at a theatre-booth in Dublin (1743), ends it by dying in the wings of Drury Lane as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, and meanwhile, having learned how to act and been jilted, she replaces David Garrick's previous mistress and leading-lady—without, one hopes, offending American susceptibilities. She pouts, shouts, fights a duel and becomes the toast of the town. As such (or rather, in Mrs. Woffington's favourite breeches part of Sir Harry Wildair) she even

sings a dainty song, *A Little Bit of Dublin*, which for one fleeting moment I took for an equally pretty piece of doublin'—but that, of course, would be to malign Miss Neagle, whose strong suit is her versatility. Her versatility commands respect and her verve lasts out the film. In fact they've made a fully equipped home-grown film star out of her, knocked her into shape, as you might say—though, even so, it's hard to see how in eighteenth-century Vauxhall (and in shirt-sleeves at that) she could have concealed her sex and passed herself off as a man . . . or been arrested by a " policeman." There's up-to-date, androgynous versatility for you—an anachronism as startling as the phrase " paralysed with nerves " on Mistress Woffington's lips.

One suspects that Sir Cedric Hardwicke found himself more at home in the British and Dominions studio than when making the American versions of *Les Misérables* and *Becky Sharp*. Herbert Wilcox wisely allowed him several hundred feet of clear celluloid in which to play Richard III and Shylock: sequences, in close-up, which are the making of the film, for Hardwicke seizes this screen opportunity to pay an impressive tribute to the legitimacy of the stage. It is always interesting to see film-stars with stage experience—Barrymore, Rains, Lunt—either seriously or in mockery facing imaginary foot-lights on the screen; not only is this the only point at which there can be any satisfactory connection between the two arts, but it is precisely here that their acting is most like what we must still call the real thing. Hardwicke played Garrick " off " with great suavity and sufficient insight: in effective contrast to the simple naturalism of Miss Neagle and the rest of the cast, he completed an admirable performance by the addition of just that stirring, histrionic touch which was essential to the part of a great actor—and to the film as a whole. Maire O'Maille was good too, and Hay Petrie also appreciably improved the film. He and Donald Calthrop are our only two actors who can always be relied upon to do this, whatever the quality of the parts entrusted to them.

Director Herbert Wilcox has handled his material with briskness and discretion: he guards against the talkie bugbear of words, words, words, and pulls a somewhat episodic scenario together by the American method of hopping his camera about like a two-year-old—which is just what such liveliness is, in British pictures. The clear-cut charm of Miss Doris Zinkeisen's costumes helps him in this enormously, just as her designs almost redeemed that similar British film, *Mimi*, which was otherwise so hopelessly faded and frowsy. The sets were admirable. JOHN MARKS

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

### Accent on Youth

There is something ambitious and a consequent risk of irritation about a play which continually changes tune. Mr. Samson Raphaelson's comedy *Accent on Youth*, at the Globe Theatre, is of that order. It is full of emotional variations, skilful but not quite skilful enough. This first of the September crop of West End pieces is a very theatrical American story about very theatrical American people and the point of it lies in the conduct of a middle-aged dramatist, who sees everything as " copy " and nothing as actuality. At one moment his ingenious stupidities, as he mixes drama and life, are the very stuff of artificial comedy; but unfortunately we are supposed a moment later to credit the fellow with a heart as well as with a head. The solemn moments, when we are expected to care about the dramatist's relations with a doting secretary, are tactfully commended to our sympathy by Mr. Nicholas Hannen's honest-to-goodness manner and by Miss Greer Garson's show of muted passion and inarticulate devotion. But the piece is happiest when it is being frankly inconsequent and anything can happen; one does not resent such padding as that supplied by a family butler who does physical jerks. Mr. Archibald Batty does them with such ponderous charm. When he is about, anything goes.

### " On Wings of Song " at the Tivoli

Although a thoroughly entertaining film, *On Wings of Song* strikes me as in many ways inferior to Miss Grace Moore's previous picture, *One Night of Love*. Both are operettas and, as the title song of that first effort was better than *Love Me Forever* in this, as *Santa Luccia* has more of a swing to it than *Funiculi-funicula*, and for cinematographic purposes *Madam Butterfly* is a more effective climax than *La Bohème*, we soar to operatic heights but fall a fraction short of enchantment. However, all publics the world over are music-loving publics, and to counteract any possible disappointment we are given a real tenor, more singing and more comedy. Miss Moore even produces a parody of " scat " singing which cuts cruelly both ways; allowing herself to look a fool, in an exceedingly comic sequence she manages to underline the boundless voodoo idiocy of vo-de-o-do. Better still, the humorous Albertini is in this film more often left disgustedly gasping and gesticulating at Leo Carrillo's Latin extravagance and teddy-bear tricks. Carrillo himself lacks the polish and novelty of Tullio Carminati, who was the opera-singer's mentor in *One Night of Love*, but as an honest gambler-gangster and patron of the arts—and of Margaret Howard (Miss Moore)—he is excellently cast. Apparently they bumped him off in the original version of this film, but romantically he now survives to " listen happily as Margaret sings triumphantly." And a good thing too.

## THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, September 6th—
A. K. C. Ottaway on " What Education Ought To Be," Conway Hall, 7.30.

SATURDAY, September 7th—
Rudolf Arnheim on " Some Aspects of Film." Y.M.C.A. Centre, Tottenham Court Road, 8.

SUNDAY, September 8th—
S. K. Ratcliffe on " Christianity and Communism," Conway Hall, 11.

MONDAY, September 9th—
" Lady Precious Stream " (resumed run), Little.
" Arms and the Man," Everyman Cinema, Hampstead.
" The Ever Young," Rutland Boughton Music-Drama Festival, Bath.

TUESDAY, September 10th—
Ballets de Léon Woizikovsky, Coliseum.

# Current Literature

## BOOKS IN GENERAL

> . . . He was exactly well-bred, and what by a modest behaviour natural to him, what by a Civility become almost as natural, his Conversation was easie and obliging. He had a strange vivacity of thought and vigour of expression: his Wit had a subtilty and sublimity both, that was scarce imitable.

SUCH is Bishop Burnet's description of Lord Rochester as a young man. The son of the Wilmot who had hidden Charles in the oak at Boscobel brought "a violent love of pleasure and a disposition to extravagant mirth" with him to court, and he had other qualities which appealed to the most disillusioned, witty and intellectual of our kings. Rochester was not only one of "the merry gang," he was genuinely speculative about ideas, a Hobbist, at times a freethinker who was ready to turn ideas of honour and courage and decent behaviour upside down and carry his paradoxes into practice. He was a poet, too. These qualities would perhaps have made him into a legend even if he had not been the most indecent writer, with real talent, in the English language. Finally the story of his horrible death, in consequence of his excesses, and of his death-bed conversion, provided an edifying story over which the moralist might gloat. Dr. Johnson was able to write with perfect justice, from his point of view:

> Thus in a course of drunken gaiety and gross sensuality, with intervals of study perhaps yet more criminal, with an avowed contempt of all decency and order, a total disregard of every moral, and a resolute denial of all religious obligation, he lived worthless and useless and blazed out his youth and health in lavish voluptuousness; till, at the age of one-and-thirty, he had exhausted the fund of life. . . .

Such a figure has a universal appeal and two recent volumes tesitfy that his debauchery, his indecency, his wit and even his ultimate religious fit are as fascinating now as they were to Charles II and his maids of honour.

In *Rochester* (Barker, 10*s*.) Mr. Charles Williams describes him as a great romantic figure, in flamboyant, picturesque language to which I find it hard to be just. His portrait is unconvincing and his book has little value for those who, like myself, though not scholars, are interested in scholarship. In *Rochester: Portrait of a Restoration Poet* (Lane, 8*s*. 6*d*.), Mr. de Sola Pinto endeavours to rehabilitate his subject's character whilst making the highest claims for him as a poet. Thus he says of the lyrics:

> In these poems Rochester is not merely one of the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease; he is one of the great love poets of the world, worthy to rank with Catullus and with Burns.

What is there to justify these strong words? One poem, perhaps, for I agree that it is the best:

> My dear Mistress has a Heart
> Soft as those kind Looks she gave me;
> When with Love's resistless Art,
> And her Eyes, she did enslave me.
> But her Constancy's so weak,
> She's so wild, and apt to wander;
> That my jealous Heart would break,
> Should we live one Day asunder.
>
> Melting Joys about her move,
> Killing Pleasures, wounding Blisses;
> She can dress Eyes in Love,
> And her Lips can arm with kisses.
> Angels listen when she speaks,
> She's my Delight, all Mankind's Wonder:
> But my jealous Heart would break,
> Should we live one Day asunder.

This poem seems so different in spirit and in sensibility from everything known to be by Rochester, that when we consider the absence of proofs of authorship, we may well wonder if it is really his. It is worth remarking that Mr. Charles Williams discusses at some length the poem, *A Pastoral Courtship*, as Rochester's, although Mr. Thorn-Drury and Mr. Montague Summers have vehemently pointed out that it is by Thomas Randolph. Mr. de Sola Pinto is aware of the deficiency in quantity and suggests:

> Some of the best of Rochester's poetry was perhaps lived rather than written.

But on that score, who knows what claims may not exceed Rochester's? It is not only the lyrics, however, that are in question:

> If Milton is the great poet of belief in the 17th century, Rochester is the great poet of unbelief.

There is no doubt that he *ought* to have been such a poet, equal to Shelley, and able to express the scientific curiosity, the new-found freedom of ideas and the revolution in moral values which occurred at the Restoration. Unfortunately he was not. He wrote such lines as:

> For Hunger or for Love *they* bite or tear,
> Whilst wretched Man is still in Arms for Fear.
> For Fear he arms, and is of Arms afraid;
> From Fear to Fear successively betrayed
> . . . . . .
> Merely for safety, after Fame they thirst
> For all Men would be Cowards if they durst.

And reflected, with surprise, that honour "'tis noble confidence in Men, in Women mean mistrustful shame." Yet a large part of his poetry is devoted to calling the men he knew cowards and the women whores. Rochester wrote little prose; some affectionate letters to his wife and some rather contemptuous love-letters to Mrs. Barry, the great actress whom he had taught to act. Mr. Charles Williams, by the way, says mysteriously: "It is impossible, however tempting, to identify Elizabeth Barry with Sarah Cooke," the other young actress trained by Rochester for the stage—and then remarks: "Her origin, if we assume she was not Sarah Cooke, is hidden." Later he blithely records the production of *Valentinian* in which both Sarah Cooke and Mrs. Barry simultaneously appeared. They were both extremely well-known actresses, totally unlike in appearance and in talent. In prose Rochester also wrote the delightful *Alexander Bendo's Advertisement*, when he set up, in disguise, as a quack doctor in the city. Amusing as it is, it is an exaggeration for Mr. de Sola Pinto to say it is "the work of a great master of prose style," and that it has "a wit and a subtly varied rhythm that anticipates the best work of Swift."

* * *

While Mr. de Sola Pinto exaggerates Rochester's gifts as a writer, he is equally concerned to whitewash his character, not always with the happiest results. Thus he explains the quarrel with Dryden by saying: "The intimacy between Dryden and Mulgrave [Dryden's other patron] probably appeared to Rochester as an insult to himself." This is to admit a petty, silly vanity and a lack of generosity in the man who was capable of it. Rochester was a fickle patron. While Mr. Charles Williams pities the patrons who had to chance whether the poets they backed were good or bad, since he can see no way of anticipating the verdict of posterity, Mr. de Sola Pinto says:

> When he favoured such inferior writers as Settle and Crowne he was probably amusing himself by watching the airs which they gave themselves when they basked in the sunshine of his favour, and maliciously enjoyed their chagrin when he withdrew his patronage from them and allowed them to see how easily their bubble reputations could be pricked.

If so it was not the amusement of an agreeable character, or of a man who either understood or cared for literature—certainly not that of a great poet comparable to Catullus, Burns and Milton. Believing that Dryden had satirised him, Rochester wrote to Savile: "I will leave the Repartee to Black Will, with a cudgel." Three ruffians waylaid the Poet Laureate in Rose Alley and gave him a beating. Mr. de Sola Pinto's attempt to shift the blame for this on to the Duchess of Portsmouth is unconvincing, to say the least. "Who'd be a Wit in Dryden's cudgell'd skin?" wrote Rochester, and his apologist declares:

> I do not believe Rochester would have written that line if he had been guilty of the Rose Alley affair. . . . There was nothing mean in the man.

Yet in a brawl at Epsom, where he was tossing fiddlers in a blanket, Rochester drew his sword on the village constable and then ran away, leaving one of his boon companions dying on the ground. "There seems no reason to accuse Rochester of anything worse than drunken folly," is the gloss. But to run away, while one of your companions is being killed in a brawl of your own making, is mean. For all these things Rochester's own explanation is sufficient—for Burnet wrote:

> The natural heat of his fancy being inflamed by wine, made him so extravagantly pleasant, that many, to be diverted by that humour, studied to engage him deeper and deeper in intemperance; which at length did so utterly subdue him, that, as he told me, for five years together he was continually drunk; not all the while under the visible effect of it, but his blood was so inflamed, that he was not, in all that time, cool enough to be perfect Master of himself.

Drunk for five years, his brain and body crazy with several disorders, and impotent, he was near his death. In his castigation of Mr. Hayward's edition of Rochester in *The Playhouse of Pepys* (Kegan Paul, 21s.), Mr. Montague Summers remarks that Mr. Hayward's "account of Rochester's death is offensive and in shocking taste." It seems to me the best thing in his introduction to the *Works of Rochester* (Nonesuch Press). Rochester was, as Mr. Hayward suggests, *un croyant désespéré* and "maybe he was suffering from a slight form of mental aberration, induced by mercurial intoxication after a long course of treatment for venereal disease." For a year he lay dying, suffering great pain, disgusted by the thought of his former life, and in these circumstances he was converted by the resolute Burnet. To Fanshaw, one of "the merry gang" who called in order to cheer him up, he cried out:

> There is a God, a powerful God, and he is a terrible God to unrepenting sinners.

Fanshaw reported that Rochester was mad; Mr. de Sola Pinto says: "he had passed into regions of the spirit where such men as Savile and Fanshaw could not follow him." But the words were not those of a man undergoing a mystical religious experience, but those of a weak man terrified of eternal torture, and eager to run away from his former ideas, as he had run away leaving his friend Downs to welter in his blood. The life of Rochester is the subject for a terrible tragedy, not for Mr. Williams' romantic word-painting or for Mr. de Sola Pinto's whitewashing. It is worthy of a great writer; to tell the truth about Rochester is not to belittle him. He had an extraordinary charm and fascination and was the greatest of our wits. Moreover some of his indecent writing, though not all, is among his best.

DAVID GARNETT

## NEW NOVELS

**The Beachcomber.** By WILLIAM MCFEE. *Faber and Faber.* 8s. 6d.
**Daughters of Albion.** By ALEC BROWN. *Boriswood.* 8s. 6d.
**The Man Who Had Everything.** By LOUIS BROMFIELD. *Cassell.* 6s.
**Innocence and Experience.** By PHYLLIS BOTTOME. *Lane.* 7s. 6d.
**Shy Virginity.** By NEVE SCARBOROUGH. *Peter Davies.* 7s. 6d.
**The Lion Beat the Unicorn.** By NORAH C. JAMES. *Duckworth.* 7s. 6d.

Mr. William McFee has the very rare virtue of being able to write about the ocean in a simple, direct and unsentimental manner. For the ocean (as Conrad never tired of informing us) is a dangerous mistress. She leads men astray. There are times when she lures novelists to their doom. And the storyteller who has resisted the charm of the Soil, and refused the temptation of chronicling the growth and decadence of some immense, elaborately interrelated, richly earth-bound yet surprisingly talkative yeoman family, often loses his bearings in a sea-fog. Mr. McFee is refreshingly matter-of-fact. His protagonists follow the sea; but they are the type of ship's officer who is too busy on the bridge or—as in this instance—among the cabins of the more personable feminine passengers, to spend hours philosophising over the rail. His new book is the study of a maritime amorist. Sidney Nevile, in spite of frequent and fervent resolutions to the contrary, cannot help finding himself in a complicated amorous embroglio wherever he sets foot. The story is told by Mr. Spenlove, a middle-aged officer of the mercantile marine, who has done his best to keep Nevile out of the scrapes into which his physical attractiveness and the natural plasticity of his temperament are perpetually leading him, and who is sympathetic and shrewdly critical in the same breath. It is a long book, voluminous and discursive, yet well written and quietly intelligent from beginning to end.

The author's approach is leisurely without being ponderous. Certain disadvantages attach to the conversational method of unfolding a narrative, since, now and then, even the most indefatigable narrator has to make a pause, and the novelist is obliged to insert a paragraph describing how his mouthpiece finishes the cigar that he has been smoking, throws away the stub and promises to continue his story to-morrow if the weather is still wet; but Mr. McFee surmounts these difficulties in masterly style. One becomes as concerned with *The Beachcomber* as Mr. Spenlove himself. He is such a nice young man, so harmless and so foolish, that it seems a shame Aphrodite should take a destructive interest in his commonplace and industrious career, and that he should lose his job—all through a woman's jealousy—and be reduced to the ignominious position in which the narrative picks him up. Yet more agreeable than the smooth and ingeniously managed flow of Mr. McFee's narrative method are the occasional felicities of expression that emerge—his knack of producing the right epithet in the right place. Mr. McFee is an unpretentious novelist; but he is a competent storyteller, with a genuine feeling for the beauty of language.

In addition, he has a moderating sense of humour. And though Mr. Alec Brown, for example, has eloquence, energy and the gift of generous invective, humour is a quality that he does not possess. But humour, after all, is a bourgeois virtue; while *Daughters of Albion* is a rigorously Marxian novel, concerned to castigate that very middle class which has had a virtual monopoly of novelists, poets and revolutionary thinkers for the last hundred years. No doubt it will recommend itself to the more masochistic members of the upper bourgeoisie. With a dexterity that must surely derive from an excellent bourgeois education, it sets to work to uncover the essential nastiness—the fundamental rottenness—of a prosperous middle-class English family, consisting of a father—a lecherous old patriarch—and his five daughters, all of whom, save for the blessed revolutionary exception, come to a bad or, at least, a remarkably dreary and undignified end. Mary quarrels with her father about the Means Test. She is discovered defiantly perusing *Das Kapital* on Christmas Day. As for the others—well, one of them is married to a clergyman, another to an unsatisfactory intellectual; Cynthia is a bloodless and heartless prig; and Irene finds her vocation as a prostitute. Mr. Brown harries them remorselessly from failure to failure. He writes energetically—at times brilliantly; yet it would be a particularly unforeseeing reader who did not realise that the scales were weighted against Charlotte, Muriel, Cynthia and Irene from the very first page, and that only the virtuous Mary could escape with honour. Their hypocritical old father must expect the worst; and Mr. Brown sternly sees to it that he receives his due.

The chief drawback of orthodox Marxian literature is that it submits the various, complex, endlessly interesting material of real life to an extremely rudimentary process of simplification; but the point of view of the best-selling bourgeois novelist imposes a simplification of an equally unreal and even more exasperating kind. Mr. Louis Bromfield is a clever storyteller gone badly wrong. *Twenty-four Hours* was uncommonly readable; whereas *The Man Who Had Everything* is as specious, slick and, ultimately as unconvincing, as any Hollywood attempt to film a novel. The book begins with a fashionable New York party. Everybody is "somebody":

> . . . the lawyers and actors, the editors and politicians, the playwrights and novelists, the singers and dancers, the women who were beautiful and the women who were fashionable. All of them were there because they were the successful ones. That was why they had come together. Admiring yet envious of each other, pleased and yet bitter with the subtle gall of a bitterness which was at the same time frustration. They were the fortunate and the unscrupulous, and their glitter was a trifle inhuman.

And Tom, the successful dramatist, who is celebrating his thirty-seventh birthday and the last night of a play that has run for three hundred and two performances, is more of a personage than most. But success, as we have all heard, may fail to satisfy. Tom is discontented—at odds with his pretty, unfaithful wife, bored by his bewitching devoted mistress. . . . So off he sets

*à la recherche du temps perdu ;* and there, in France as it happens, he discovers—not quite the secret of happiness, but the clue to a degree of spiritual contentment he has never before obtained. Tom returns to the arms of his devoted mistress ; and the story fades out in a quiver of factitious emotionalism.

Miss Bottome, too, is adroit and sentimental. Here is a volume of short stories, very skilfully constructed yet faintly unsatisfying when you come to examine the content and manner of individual tales. I could wish, for example, that Miss Bottome had spared our blushes and not described the young girl in " The Visitation " as " a clean, fierce creature, as inarticulate and simple as a boy," gifted with a " beautiful daffodil head " and " the features of a questing Diana " ; that her stories did not fall into short, bright paragraphs that seem to ring a little bell, typewriter-fashion, just when they are approaching the last word. Yet *Innocence and Experience* is a capable book ; and that alone is something to be thankful for at the present day. Miss Bottome knows her business and is in command of her medium ; with the result that one reads her stories whether one enjoys them or not.

*Shy Virginity* deals with the pathos of clumsy girlhood. We have most of us been annoyed—and, in our more indulgent moments, perhaps a little touched—by some harmless, helpless puppy-dog of a young female, good-natured but plain, who blunders through life, rolling big eyes full of anguish, anxiety and intimate feminine frustration. Miss Scarborough's heroine is just such a girl ; and the novelist extracts a good deal of pathos from Dallas Wyat's attempts, first to carve out a musical career, afterwards to adapt herself to the married state. . . Eventually, Dallas settles down. So does George Colne. In *The Lion Beat the Unicorn*, Miss Norah James has related at some length the difficulties that beset a small but ambitious bookseller who wishes to sell " good books " but finds himself obliged to vend Christmas cards, valentines and cheap stationery instead, and the pangs that his loss of faith is apt to cause him. The book is a catalogue of minor misfortunes, described in an honest and straightforward, but flattish, style.

PETER QUENNELL

## INADEQUATE CRITICISM

**The History of the English Novel : Vol. VI. Edgeworth, Austen, Scott.** By ERNEST A. BAKER. *Witherby*. 16*s*.

Dr. Baker gives, perhaps, too much space to story-telling. A summary of *The Absentee* will bear a reasonable relation to the original ; can one say the same of *Castle Rackrent*, or of a Jane Austen novel, in which plot and character prove inextricable, and detail is all-important ? The Frenchman, looking for an English classic to translate, to whom his friend proposed one of these books, describing it as the story of a woman faded and past her girlhood, who wins back a former lover, did not probably carry away a very accurate idea of *Persuasion ;* and even a much fuller analysis is apt to seem as lamentable and pointless as the explanation of a joke. As for Scott, one can tell his stories, no doubt—but how often are they worth it ? Perhaps no critic of repute ever made a more fantastic statement than Mr. E. M. Forster when he declared that one reads Scott to find out what happens next. And moreover, Dr. Baker's story-telling, though excessive, is half-hearted—inadequate and confusing to the ignorant, and superfluous to the well-informed.

But there are graver charges to make against him. It is, no doubt, a hard matter to write of Jane Austen so as to satisfy or even placate her admirers, yet it can be done—let them read, for instance, Prof. Bradley's essay, and see with respect what sheer character and modest integrity can accomplish. But no slips or slovenliness will pass here ; the material is too limited, and most who know it at all know it by heart. And Dr. Baker has made so many slips—not simply errors of judgment, which are always arguable. One may be stunned to hear that " the erring Marianne " engages our warm sympathy, or that Mr. John Knightley is " a chip of the same block " as Mr. Palmer—but such remarks cannot, after all, be authoritatively contradicted. What shall we say, however, to the statement that Julia Bertram ran off with Mr. Yates " to show that she too was a woman of spirit " ? We have it on record that Julia's motive was " selfish alarm " ; she ran away because she dared not face Sir Thomas after her sister's elopement. The book contains a number of these small inaccuracies. Worse, we are asked to believe that Anne Elliot is " not the same " at the end of *Persuasion* as at the beginning, that she, like Emma, undergoes a change of heart, and that she has " bitterly repented her tame surrender " of Captain Wentworth eight years back. Actually, of course, the " change of heart " is complete when the book opens ; to say that Anne's " part as a critical observer is not to the fore," to compare a heroine who never acts or judges wrong with the misguided Emma, to imagine that she " repents " or thinks her conduct " tame," is simply to have misread the whole novel.

When Dr. Baker mistakes so clear a point, he can hardly be expected to come unscathed through the *Mansfield Park* ordeal. This novel is the real test for Austen critics, and Dr. Baker shows no sign of appreciating its special character. Some works of art have a power above charm, attractiveness, the appeal of sympathy : *Mansfield Park* is one of them. That our hearts do not go out to Fanny or Edmund is irrelevant ; what matters is the grip of the whole book, its gravity, tension, miniature-epic quality. A certain fullness and explicitness in the moral—to Dr. Baker merely " heavy "—is appropriate here, and bears out more than one ringing and heroic sentence, which come off, though Fanny's outburst in the chapel, and her two nature-rhapsodies, are a failure. It will hardly be believed that Dr. Baker has nothing to say about the Portsmouth chapters, with their brilliant success in a strange field ; moreover, he scoffs at the idea that Henry Crawford should have been enthusiastic about Fanny's goodness, or that Fanny, if things had been different, might have married him. " Imagine what *Mansfield Park* would have been if she [Jane Austen] had declared for such a conclusion ! " Quite so—she could never have married him *in the book* : but what has that got to do with it ? Dr. Baker is perhaps best on Jane Austen's morality, though he does not quite face the fact that her sexual code has become a stumbling-block. The fundamental objection to the theatre at Mansfield Park was *not* the play chosen : the truth is that if you have determined on a sexual standard like that of the novels, you must organise the whole of society to maintain it.

To Scott, Dr. Baker seems too kind in the analytical chapters, and rather parsimonious in the summing-up ; he has much to say there on what Scott was *not*—a tiresome habit—and is inclined to quote Hazlitt against him, Hazlitt who could scarcely bear the idea of the Scotch Tory's greatness, and seized every chance to play the devil's advocate. Yet even in the full tide of censure Dr. Baker has little to say about Scott's possibly worse fault, namely the fact that so many of the novels fail to begin till they are half


## Open your eyes

This paper,* unlike many of those which clutter the world, serves a purpose. But it is not, therefore, dull. Its purpose is to relate world events with the best books which have been written about or bear any relation to those events. It ties the printed word to the actions of men and women ; and either interprets those actions in terms of the most interesting and socially exact philosophy ever conceived, or it informs its readers where they may, in fact, procure books which deal with those events from a point of view at variance with the one usually propounded.

In short, this paper tells you how to analyse from a constructive socialist angle the major events of the world to-day.

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* The Eye, published by us at this address. First copy (September 1935), free—write for it enclosing half-penny stamp.

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finished—some, like *The Pirate*, never begin at all. Another leading disability he observes, but I think misinterprets. Scott, he says, cared only for oddities, originals; "those among his characters who are simply normal . . . interest neither him nor anyone else." I don't think it was entirely that; it was gentility that paralysed him—he was so full of reverence for the upper classes. Many of his peasants are normal enough, and excellent for all that, but his ideas of "what is necessary in manners to make a young man quite the thing" were far more unfortunate than Mr. Elliot's, and the moment someone was to be thoroughly well-bred, nullity set in. Had not Maria Edgeworth, in a lesser degree and different way, rather the same failing? and have we not poor Thady's rank in society to thank for the unique success of *Castle Rackrent?* We must allow, too, in Scott's case, for the liberating effect of dialect—to which the Anglo-Irish idiom of *Castle Rackrent* of course corresponds.

This volume ends with a useful chapter on the other Scottish novelists, and it must be said that Dr. Baker is more satisfactory as a historian than as a critic. His style, however, is uniformly confused and uninspiring.

K. JOHN

## THE ABBEY THEATRE

**The Fays of the Abbey Theatre.** By W. G. FAY and CATHERINE CARSWELL. With a Foreword by JAMES BRIDIE. *Rich and Cowan.* 10s. 6d.

"*The Abbey Theatre was first and foremost a theatrical not a literary movement.* It was the creation not of men of letters but of actors," writes Mr. Fay, and the italics are his own. In view of the rich literary legend extending from *Hail and Farewell* to the latest American postgraduate thesis, this statement is almost a challenge. But there is more truth in it than Mr. Fay suspects. A nodding acquaintance even with a few score of Abbey plays will tempt one to believe that the Irish Players were really the masters of the dramatists. These high-spirited actors were destined to bundle their dramatists into an extravagant world of tragedy and comedy which had as little connection with reality as the libretto of a Russian ballet. The pace was fast and furious and younger writers began to turn to the novel in their search for reality. With the arrival of Sean O'Casey the Abbey movement seemed to be entering into a new phase. A few suspected that the famous pot of broth had become a Dublin stew, but they were silenced by excited University professors, dramatic critics and other celebrities, who were not content to accept a last glorious pot-walloping for its own sake. Yet a few weeks ago the Directors of the Abbey Theatre, in a pessimistic announcement, indicated that there was a dearth in suitable Irish plays. The Abbey Theatre, in fact, faces an artistic crisis, and the problems of its early struggles described by Mr. Fay in his new book have returned once more.

The wealth of good stories and anecdotes which enliven this book may be a boon to the popular reviewer. But this sheer abundance is liable to obscure the real issues. Were it not for Willie Fay and his brother Frank, who died some years ago, the Abbey Theatre and its earlier tradition of acting might never have existed. As far as one can judge from a modest little note, Mrs. Carswell has been content to "put the English" on the book, and she has done this excellently. But the Fays left the Abbey Theatre in 1908 towards the close of the Synge period, and, as collaborator, Mrs. Carswell would have needed a wider acquaintance with the later developments of the dramatic movement in order to bring out the significance of the earlier struggle.

Willie Fay was educated at the same Irish college as James Joyce, Conal O'Riordan and other Irish writers, a fact which may have had something to do with his guarded attitude towards purely peasant drama. After various experiences in small touring companies the Fays, inspired by the example of Ole Bull, Antoine and J. T. Grein, decided to found a small Art Theatre for themselves. The performance of Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* by English actors brought over specially for the purpose strengthened that resolve. They began in a cheap Dublin hall and were helped by A.E., who wrote a play for them, Seumas O'Sullivan, Padraic Colum, James Cousins, and other poets and enthusiasts. Mr. Yeats gave them his new play *Kathleen ni Houlihan.* Forces were combined and the new theatre was founded. Mr. Fay pays complete tribute to the generosity and untiring devotion of Miss Horniman, who not only subsidised the movement, and gave it a local habitation, but devoted herself to extensive propaganda on its behalf. Through genius or chance the Fays discovered for themselves that natural method of beautiful speech and restrained gesture which proved irresistible in those early days.

The success abroad of Synge, Lady Gregory and others led to a gradual specialisation in peasant plays. Believing this to be the line of least resistance, Mr. Fay held out for the wider ideals of the original movement. He was overruled and resigned. In his own words: "On January 13th, 1908, I left the Abbey Theatre for the last time, going out a poorer man than I had come in." He was accompanied by his brother.

Mr. Fay's book throws light on many interesting points. He tells us, for instance, that Synge could not forgive the crass ignorance, the fatuity, the malevolence, with which *The Well of the Saints* had been received. "Very well, then," he said to Mr. Fay bitterly one night, "the next play I write I will make sure will annoy them." That play was *The Playboy of the Western World,* and despite Mr. Fay's long pleadings, Synge refused to modify it. So much sentimental and tearful twaddle has been written about the Playboy riots that it is good to have the truth at last. Synge was a hard hitter and he did not complain over the famous shindy. It was left to others after his death to represent him as a picturesque and pale literary martyr.

Mr. Fay's last chapters deal with his later experiences as an actor in England, and those experiences are foreshadowed by Tree's remark to him, a remark which some will find rather tragic: "Of course, I'm afraid you will have to say 'wat' instead of 'what' and 'wich' instead of 'which,' not to mention 'bawth' for 'bath.' It's all wrong, I know, but you will have to do it. Good morning!"

AUSTEN CLARKE

## A HOLY ALLIANCE

**Anthropology in Action.** By G. GORDON BROWN and A. MCD. BRUCE HUTT. *Oxford University Press* (for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures).

This is an extremely interesting experiment in collaboration and one which, eminently successful in itself, should be still more useful as an example which it is hoped will be widely followed.

As an anthropologist of distinction, Dr. Gordon Brown needs no introduction, and he has been fortunate in finding a coadjutor in Mr. Hutt, an administrative official in Tanganyika Territory, obviously sympathetic as well as experienced. The collaboration is blessed by the then Chief Secretary, who supplied an introduction in which the working arrangement between the two authors is explained. For clearly each, being a specialist in his own sphere, had to tread delicately in order to avoid infringing on the other's prerogative—the one offering information and advice, the other being responsible for policy and the application of the information provided. As the authors emphasise in the joint conclusions, this involved them both in what appears to be an abnegation of human qualities; but without such an abnegation friction would have been inevitable, and it is not the least of their triumphs that they have succeeded in achieving this volume as a practical demonstration that there is no necessary antagonism between administrators and anthropologists, who are both ultimately concerned with the same thing.

> If administration means anything, it means the guiding of a people in such a manner that their social and economic evolution will ultimately prove beneficial. The process of change should allow of adaptation to new conditions, without, at the same time, destroying all that is healthy in the original structure. Consequently we consider that the study of cultural change is not only essential to an applied anthropology but is the most important part of it.

And, inferentially, it is no less important to administration.

It is desirable to emphasise the views thus expressed by the authors and to reiterate that one of them is an administrative official, since anthropology is still looked upon, not only by officialdom, with a certain amount of suspicion. There are two reasons for this, only one of which is valid. There have been anthropological experts attached to Colonial Governments whose superfluity of advice, often crudely worded, has infringed the prerogatives of the executive officials. Their tactlessness has been partly responsible for some disinclination to make anthropology a partner in government, and this book happily proves that with mutual sympathy and an understanding of their respective rôles there is no reason in the world why the partnership should not be harmonious.

The second reason lies in a fallacious assumption that anthropologists wish to build a wall around primitive institutions and to keep them as museum pieces for their private edification; that all

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anthropologists, in short, are reactionaries of the worst type. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The anthropologist perhaps more than anyone else (and this book gives ample evidence of it) realises that no culture is static, that every culture has changed in the past and is always changing. His insistence that some of the so-called primitive institutions which we see working to-day have the seeds of greatness in them and should not be arbitrarily jettisoned has doubtless given rise to this wholly unfounded libel. It is all to the good that Gordon Brown and Bruce Hutt have so effectively scotched it.

The general idea of the book is based on a series of questions and answers, of discussions and further questions arising from them. The administrator posed the questions on such points as he found necessary in the course of his official duties, and the answers supplied by the anthropologist, though not always (as was to be expected) immediately conclusive, helped the former to envisage his problems from a new and more comprehensive angle. Several of the questions and answers are given in an appendix to illustrate the method of the enquiry, but it was found (as was again to be expected) that no one question could be completely isolated, but that all individual problems had to be considered in the light of the cultural complex as a whole. This meant that the problems could not even be understood, much less explained, unless the cultural panorama were unfolded: and this has led Dr. Gordon Brown to analyse the culture of the Hehe tribe, not from the point of view of an academic anthropologist (though he, too, will be greatly benefited by the description), but from the point of view of one studying the changing facets of culture under the impact of an alien civilisation.

The book accordingly consists of a preliminary chapter on the nature and method of the experiment, by both authors: a long and important chapter on the Hehe Tribe, by Dr. Gordon Brown, which provides the cultural data: a chapter, following this, whose title "The Changing Tribe" is a sufficient description: and a final chapter of Conclusions, contributed by both authors.

As one who has been both an administrator and an anthropologist, I can commend this book without reservation. It is utterly impartial, and the balance between the points of view of the two authors is admirably adjusted. Where friction might so easily have entered in, it is pleasant to state that there is no evidence whatever of anything but the most complete harmony, and this I feel sure was achieved by a mutual give and take, which has resulted in a delightful, informative and extremely important work, written with sympathy and a lightness of touch which makes it and the problems it contemplates understandable even to those who have never left England. My only captious criticism concerns an unfortunate absence of the usual clues indicating the locality of the map.

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## ODYSSEY IN BALLET SHOES

**Borzoi.** By IGOR SCHWEZOFF. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 9s. 6d.

Last year Hodder and Stoughton offered a prize for an autobiography written in English; in *Borzoi* Igor Schwezoff has done more than win that prize, he has produced a remarkable book.

A spoilt selfish child, son of a wealthy Russian general, he was brought up in magnificent surroundings to expect a life of decorative uselessness. But with the revolution, luxury was replaced by squalor, magnificence by poverty, and the self-indulgent child forced to become the self-reliant man. A chance meeting turned his thoughts to ballet and from that moment, until the book ends with his escape into Manchuria in 1930, we are concerned not only with his daily struggles and privations, but with his development as an individual artist in conflict with the new regime. For he is an artist, in words as well as in the ballet. There is no writing-up, no purple patchwork, merely a straightforward recording of events as he remembers them. *Borzoi* is a triumph of restraint.

In dealing with the October revolution there must be an almost irresistible temptation for an author to pile horror upon horror and curdle our blood with tales of massacre and brutality. Igor Schwezoff retains his sense of proportion. He was aware of the Red Terror, but far more acutely aware of his empty stomach. So, for a paragraph or two on street shootings and house to house searches, we have pages describing how he fared for himself: we feel that he is telling, with an unembroidered sincerity, the truth as it appeared to him then and not as he has read about it since. By seizing on essentials he describes an event, a state of mind, a personality, so vividly that we share his experience. The characters in *Borzoi* are as diverse as Russia itself, but all are alike in being flesh and blood, not half-remembered phantoms in the author's mind. Balletomanes will be interested to meet Olga Spessiva—"she wore lustrous, pale pink tights, her pink satin toe-shoes and a bright cornflower-blue 'tutu.' The dress fitted tightly to her frail, slender body, gushed out into crisp cascades of tarlatan above those most exquisite, slim, shapely legs. The raven-black hair, parted in the middle, was drawn smooth and lustrous over the ears and dressed in a little roll low on her fragile neck. The beautiful Spessiva was standing on her toes. . . ." —Geltzer, courageous veteran, riding round Moscow in a tram to rid herself of "devils," and many other ballet stars of the old and new Russias.

With the exception of his brother Yura, who had three years in Siberia, the Schwezoff family, considering their status, escaped lightly during those terrible years. They lost their possessions, but they retained their lives and a semblance of liberty; even the general was able to find work and accommodation before he was finally given permission to leave Russia. Igor himself got a job in the Academy of Science and worked his way through successive ballet schools until he became proficient enough to join a touring company in the Ukraine, eventually to be made first dancer and choreographer to the Kiev theatre in 1927. For the next three years he travelled with various companies, seeing Russia in all its aspects and meeting with many adventures. As his artistic ability increased he became more ambitious and more impatient of the propaganda-value which the Communist party attached to the ballet. His hot temper made him quarrel with associates who used his bourgeois origin and unorthodox views to bring him into disrepute. He realised the impossibility of reaching the top of his profession in Russia and when he was offered an engagement in Vladivostock he accepted, with the intention of taking any opportunity of escape that proximity to the Manchurian border might afford.

The story of that escape, of the four days that grew to be thirty, the hopeless trudging in a pair of flimsy ballet shoes over mile after mile of desolate, frozen country, and the final triumphant entry into Harbin, penniless and clothed in rags, but free—that story, for sheer sustained excitement and suspense, would put to shame a whole library of thrillers.

The author was fortunate in his material, but doubly fortunate in knowing how to use it to best advantage. Amid all the chaos he moves with an intelligent and observant eye. Like Dr. Munthe, another foreigner who has written a memorable autobiography in English, he has packed into one book material for twenty. *Borzoi* is a short-story writer's Golden Treasury.

Apart from the prologue, where he draws some rather elementary and unjust comparisons between Harbin and Soviet Russia, there is no propaganda. His purpose is to tell the story of his youth, not to justify or condemn the great social experiment which was its background. He gives the impression that, had he been a year or two younger at the time of the revolution, he would have accepted the changes which that upheaval implied. Yura, his senior by some years, was too accustomed to idleness and plenty. Igor tried to adjust himself and, failing, had the courage to risk everything for escape. Yura would make no compromise: he found his escape in a bottle of vodka. GEOFFREY PARSONS

## MORE ABOUT PLANTS

**The Romance of Gardening.** By F. KINGDON WARD. *Cape.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

**Clematis.** By ERNEST MARKHAM. *Country Life.* 5*s.*

**The Cool Greenhouse.** By L. N. SUTTON. *Putnam.* 5*s.*

If you suspect that there is a fairy lurking at the bottom of your garden and are attracted by the title of the first book—avoid it, for Mr. Kingdon Ward indulges in no whim-whams. Commencing with the statement that small gardens are taking the place of the feudal estates of the nineteenth century, that the horticultural revolution has provided the means and the post-war social-industrial revolution the will, the author strings together an immense variety of subjects, topics and comments, and says many things, some of them controversial, he has obviously been wanting to say for a long time. The result is a stimulating and informative book which shows the new gardening public the relation of their gardens and plants to the past and to conditions and flora in other parts of the world.

The size of this new public is obvious, as witness the crowds which gather at lunch-time round the flower and plant shops in any large city. But the resources at the command of the gardener compared, say, with thirty years ago are not so apparent, and Mr. Ward gives some interesting figures showing that during this time about 6,000 new species of hardy plants have been introduced into Great Britain—half the entire number of hardy plants cultivated! It is, then, to the more intelligent section of this public that Mr. Ward explains some basic principles, instructs in botanical geography and amuses with tales of plant hunting. In his sixteen chapters there is scarcely an aspect of plant life—apart from culture—not touched upon, and none on which the author has not something of interest to say. As "the destruction of our wild flowers" has once more appeared in the correspondence columns of the press, Chapter III might be appropriately cited. Here Mr. Ward explains just what would be required to be done to preserve the wild flowers of Britain unchanged. The draining of marshes and afforestation, particularly with alien trees, would have to stop; no more roads or railways or houses or factories could be built; there would be no agriculture—in short, all human activity would come to a standstill. Practically all the things that man does in a highly industrial state tend to restrict or isolate some species of flower. The flora of England is always changing, and, since the appearance of man, always has been. "A score of Englands have come into being, shone for a time, and passed away to be succeeded by something else, better or worse, but anyhow different. . . . One may be sure the yeoman of England bewailed the dwindling of the yew tree, just as Nelson's admirals deplored the increasing scarcity of oak." And so, he explains, the choice "industrialism or wilderness, whichever you prefer, but not both." Sixteen magnificent full-page illustrations help to mollify the feelings on discovering no index.

The author of *Clematis* was for many years at Gravetye with the late William Robinson, whose introduction to this book is probably the last thing he wrote. Mr. Markham has thus had unusual experience in the cultivation of this delightful plant, and as no book of importance on the clematis has apparently been published for about sixty years, it is fortunate that the gap has been filled by someone with such intimate knowledge. From the two hundred and fifty known species Mr. Markham has wisely confined his attention to those of proved hardiness and real garden value. The book can be recommended to all gardeners, as it deals fully with


# The Fabian Society

## FRIENDS' HALL LECTURES

***(Please note change of Hall)***

## Autumn, 1935

THE Autumn course of lectures will be held this year in the Friends' Hall, Euston Road, N.W.1, on six successive Thursday evenings, beginning on Thursday, October 24th, at 8.30. The general title of the course will be "Socialism and the Planned State." The dates, subjects and lecturers arranged are as follows:—

1. Thursday, 24th October. **"WHAT SOCIALIST PLANNING MEANS."**
   Chairman: THE EARL OF LISTOWEL.
   Lecturer: MR. G. D. H. COLE.
2. Thursday, 31st October. **"THE CASE AGAINST PLANNING."**
   Chairman: THE RT. HON. WEDGWOOD BENN.
   Lecturer: DR. T. E. GREGORY.
3. Thursday, 7th November. **"THE MENACE OF NAZI-FASCIST PLANNING."**
   Chairman: THE RT. HON. CHRISTOPHER ADDISON, M.P.
   Lecturer: MR. S. K. RATCLIFFE.
4. Thursday, 14th, November. **"THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT."**
   Chairman: LADY NOEL-BUXTON.
   Lecturer: PROFR. H. J. LASKI.
5. Thursday, 21st November. **"A CRITIQUE OF SOVIET PLANNING."**
   Chairman: SIR RAYMOND UNWIN.
   Lecturer: MRS. BARBARA WOOTTON.
6. Thursday, 28th November. **"THE PROSPECTS OF GREAT BRITAIN: PLAN OR NO PLAN."**
   Chairman: THE RT. HON. SIR WILLIAM JOWITT, K.C.
   Lecturer: BERTRAND RUSSELL.

Admission will be by ticket for the course, which can be applied for at once, or for each lecture separately. As the accommodation is limited, preference will be given to applicants for tickets for the whole course. Applications for single tickets will therefore be reserved until October 14th, 1935, after which the remaining seats will be allotted according to priority of application.

The price of tickets for numbered and reserved stalls is one guinea for the course of six, or five shillings for a single lecture; for numbered back stalls and front rows of gallery seats, twelve shillings for the course, or three shillings for a single lecture; for numbered back rows of stalls and gallery, six shillings for the course, or one shilling and sixpence for a single lecture.

**Applications for tickets should be sent to the Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, Westminster, S.W.1**

cultivation and propagation and contains a long descriptive list of species, hybrids and varieties, as well as Mr. Markham's selections for different purposes. The author stresses the importance of correct pruning and gives adequate instructions. Twenty-three full page half-tone illustrations accompany the text and an index is provided.

"I would like the cool greenhouse to be as popular an institution as the old Victorian conservatory," says Mr. Sutton. To this end he tells in detail how it is possible with annual, biennial and bulbous flowers to maintain a display of bloom throughout the whole year. He describes the planning and arrangement of flower "scenes" and the combinations which have proved successful. The book is the result of cumulative experience of a quarter of a century, for it is based on the records of Mr. Townsend, head gardener to Mr. Sutton and previously to the late Mr. Leonard Sutton. We commend *The Cool Greenhouse* to all who would like to make their greenhouse a real flower room and an integral part of their dwelling. There are many illustrations and adequate details for anyone who realises the reward which patience will bring him.

## ABYSSINIA

**Abyssinian Journey.** By MARCEL GRIAULE. *John Miles.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

**Abyssinia on the Eve.** By LADISLAS FARAGO. *Putnam.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

M. Griaule has made a name among authorities on Abyssinian folklore. This is his first descent "from the proud slopes of erudition." It was worth making. The book which he has written is too short and has suffered much at the hands of its translator. Even so, in the obscurity which vile rendering produces, it stands out as one of the most remarkable travel-books ever written about Abyssinia.

M. Griaule set out upon his journey equipped as very few earlier travellers have been. Not merely did he have a thorough knowledge of Amharic and a thorough knowledge of the published literature about Ethiopia; his special study of the folklore of the country gave him an extraordinary insight into the people whom he found. He has filled his pages with figures of flesh and blood, because he understood their mental processes and values. They are more significant than the harrowing incidents of his journey. M. Griaule (or his companion—one of them fainted, we are not told which) saw one thing which no other living European has seen—judicial burning of a traitor to the prince. That was in the dominions of Hailu, the mighty Ras of Godjam, whom the present Emperor has since deposed. He saw a hippopotamus hunt and the siege of rebels in a mountain cavern, great feasts and the terrible gibing of the court-buffoons, the bones of King Tecla Haimanot, Ras Hailu's father, and some successful Abyssinian surgery. He and his companion escaped gangrene of the feet and death by starvation or exposure. When they struggled into Addis Ababa, most of their draft animals and nearly all their specimens for the Jardin des Plantes were dead. But M. Griaule had brought a great deal away. In such hands ethnography is more than a dead science of collection and classification. It catches the very lives of individuals and peoples.

Thanks to his mastery of all the necessary instruments, his sympathy and imaginative insight, M. Griaule has preserved an extraordinary gallery of persons from Godjam in the last years of its last independent ruler. Ras Hailu may have died in prison or retirement. He lives in all his cruelty and greatness with his favourites about him and his buffoons—the dwarf and the hermaphrodite and the monk. And very many minor characters of *Abyssinian Journey* live with him.

M. Farago was sent out to Addis Ababa by Associated Press this spring. He spent some weeks there, took good photographs and made a short excursion into Ogaden, where monkeys chased him. As an efficient reporter he collected a great mass of stories. Without the slightest knowledge of the country or its language, he was bound to make a good many blunders. He has made them.

IGOR VINOGRADOFF

## WORDSWORTH

**The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. 1787-1805.** Edited by ERNEST DE SELINCOURT. *Oxford University Press.* 25*s.*

This is the first of three volumes which will contain practically all the extant letters written by Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy. The task of tracing them, and in many instances of deciphering them, must have been a very difficult one, and one cannot speak too highly of the order and clarity which Mr. Ernest de Selincourt has brought into the chaos through which he has fought his way. His notes, too, wherever a letter needs elucidation, are models of compactness and lucidity.

The inflexible egotism of Wordsworth, which is fully brought out in these letters, has none of the zest and fire which make the egotism of Wagner, for example, or of Balzac attractive and almost disarming. It was an egotism which proceeded not from a desire to dazzle others, but from an extraordinary insensibility to others except so far as they served his purpose. In this insensibility he was encouraged by Dorothy, who, charming and sensitive though she was, allowed herself to be almost as egotistic on behalf of her brother as he was himself. In the summer of 1793 she wrote to a friend that William was going on a tour through the West of England with a gentleman who was defraying all expenses. "As William," she adds, "has not the prospect of any immediate employment I think he cannot pursue a better scheme . . . and he is perfectly at liberty to quit his companion as soon as anything more advantageous shall offer." This accommodating companion was Raisley Calvert, who a year or so later made a will leaving six hundred pounds to Wordsworth. Calvert was dying when he made his will, which he altered just before his death, changing the six hundred pounds to nine hundred. During these months Wordsworth was, in his own phrase, "much engaged with my sick friend, and sorry I am to add that he worsens daily." No one could blame Wordsworth if his pleasure at the legacy outweighed his distress at his friend's death, but at least one would have expected that he would not deprive Calvert of the posthumous credit of having been valued by him for other than purely interested reasons. Yet in a letter to Sir George Beaumont detailing the obstacles which had hampered his genius Wordsworth went to some pains to explain that he and Calvert had not really been friends. He would, he says, have been forced into the Church or Law had not a friend left him nine hundred pounds. "This bequest was from a young man with whom, though I call him friend, I

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had but little connection; and the act was done entirely from a confidence on his part that I had powers and attainments which might be of use to mankind."

The same bland absorption in himself comes out in his proposal to the publisher of the *Lyrical Ballads* to insert some poems of his own in a new edition, in the place of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, which seemed, he says, to have been on the whole an injury to the volume. In no other poet is it so difficult to find in his character the moral counterpart of what is greatest in his imaginative work. When Lamb told Wordsworth that the second volume of the *Lyrical Ballads* contained nothing which had moved him so much as certain pieces in the first, Wordsworth replied that he was compelled to wish Lamb a more extended range of sensibility, being obliged to believe that he would receive large influxes of happiness and happy thoughts. Even the greatest admirers of Wordsworth's unique genius in his best moments must feel that those moments would have been far more numerous if Wordsworth's conception of sensibility had not been confined to the appreciation by others of himself.

# Week-end Competitions

## No. 286

**Set by Philip Jordan**

It is high time that the "clerihew" was applied to this day and age, if only to simplify history for the growing generation. We therefore offer our usual prizes (two guineas, and half-a-guinea) for clerihews on any four of the following: Anthony Eden, Litvinoff, Hailé Selassie, Aldous Huxley, Mussolini, Hermann Goering, Stalin, John Simon, Franklin Roosevelt, Anthony Adverse, Barbara Hutton, Oswald Spengler, Cecil B. de Mille, Greto Garbo, Vernon Bartlett. Prizes will be awarded more for relevancy than for any other quality.

Should there be any readers of this paper unhappy enough not to know what a "clerihew" is (I'm sure there are not) here is one:

"Jonathan Swift
Never went up in a lift:
Neither did the author of *Robinson Crusoe*
Do so."

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RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, September, 13th.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

# RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 284

**Set by Norman Collins**

We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a poem or piece of doggerel in any metre, suitable for chanting at the wheel, to keep the forgetful motorist constantly in mind of the major points of the Road Code, the whole to run to not more than 20 lines, and brevity to be considered as one of the criteria.

**Report by Norman Collins**

The numerous (in the first flush of gratified resentment I almost wrote innumerable) entries to this competition make it painfully evident how far motoring for pleasure has evolved in this age of progress into a non-stop handicap with Death—Death brilliantly maintaining his lead and being always just out of sight round the next corner. Indeed, the keynote of the competition is the grim jest of "Bud" Mattinson that A.A. members who kill two or more A.A. scouts on any one trip get their badges confiscated. So far, then, as Mr. Hore-Belisha is concerned he has done everything he could to make this competition a success: he has kept the essentially fragile and smashable nature of man to the front of the public consciousness. It is on the side of prosody that No. 284 collapses. When I suggested doggerel I meant decent, well-bred doggerel—the sort of thing that the greatest of us write in our least moments: I did not mean mongrelel, or whatever is the name for the still lower form, the veritable preparatory, of verse. And though those entrants who wrote:

Be deft
Keep to the left
Use your sight
Pass on the right

may still receive the Belisha Badge for good driving they can scarcely earn the Laureate's award for good poetry. Some notable couplets were, however, added to the national heritage.

When your hand's on the throttle
Don't indulge in the bottle.—Gerald Summers.

Keep to the left! Go slow on roads that wind—
Faster you go, sooner you danger find.—"Ajax."

The thought of these my ardour cools—
Jay-walkers, children, dogs and fools.—H. F. Lawes.

Mark when the peeler
Extends his great feeler.—Mrs. Lawes.

I knew a policeman never could be wrong,
I knew each magistrate was Wisdom's voice.—"Spiro, Spero."

Arthur Oliver submitted some neat Anglo-Latin verses reminiscent of a more graceful age. Mr. Guy Innes's motor-spiritual contained four more verses nearly as good as this:

Jes' watch deir step an' de traffic-lights,
An' de traffic-cop, an' yo' lef's an' rights,
An' de one-way signs: an' w'en yo' done fillin'
Don' think yo' gwine to run ober chillen.

Mr. Frank Ziegler concludes an excellent poem with the compassionate verse:

I'll stop if I am yawning,
But won't do this, or turn,
Without sufficient warning
To whom it may concern.

But First Prize must go to "Issacher."

FIRST PRIZE

THE HIGHWAY CODE

(To the tune of *Sing a Song of Sixpence.*)

Sing a song of Faculties, nerve and sight and mind:
Don't be drunk, disorderly, epileptic, blind:
Sitting in the driver's seat do not go to sleep;
Turning out of side roads look before you leap.
When you see a beacon be sure that you can stop:
Do not kill pedestrians; *never* kill a cop.
Don't arouse the midnight with your siren's hearty blare:
Never try to filter if the arrow isn't there.
Never jump the red light: do not earn abuse
By signing on another car, then stepping on the juice.
Do not overtake upon a bend or up a hill;
Though you're late already that may make you later still.

# Back in Town!

In our previous effusion we gave away the secret of Goss copy-writing. We wish we could now solve the problem of how to write about the necessity for well-cut clothes, when here we are scribbling these lines in a delightful west-country cove where shorts, shirt and shoes are the alternative in men's wear to a swimming costume. However, before the month is out most of us will be back again in town, and when the time arrives to visit the tailor out will come the special little fads and fancies about style and cut which he has grown to expect from us.

But thinking of the freedom of holiday dress, or undress, leads us to remind readers that nowadays there is no excuse for discomfort even in the most formal of men's clothes. An accumulation of small changes in fashions allows the tailor to give a greater degree of comfort to-day than ever before within living memory.

In their training the Goss brothers followed the usual routine of anyone who aspires to have a full and thorough knowledge of his calling, but this is not to say that they are hidebound by traditions in their practice. They are bound only by the wishes of their customers and an immovable insistence on first-class workmanship down to the smallest detail. In materials the limits of choice are set by the manufacturers, but by giving a rather unusual amount of care and thought in selection the Goss brothers contrive to offer a range as distinctive and pleasant as it is varied.

If we are to have the pleasure of replenishing your wardrobe this autumn, may we ask you to come along, or send for us, in good time. Frankly your only gain, in coming early, is to be prepared for the changes of weather and perhaps for more frequent demands on dress clothes, otherwise the standard of workmanship and the wide choice of materials are the same whether you come early or late. However, to us there is a real advantage if at least some customers can avoid the eleventh hour. The personal service we give is a self-imposed limitation on output.

The two brothers Goss, assisted by Mr. Whitehouse, do all the measuring, cutting and fitting personally. They employ only first-class sewing tailors and their selection of materials is wide in range, distinctive in design and durable in quality. A Goss lounge suit of the very best materials costs from Eight to Ten Guineas, whilst there is a good selection of thoroughly dependable materials costing no more than Six Guineas for a suit. Dress suits from Nine Guineas. Overcoats from Six Guineas. Whatever you pay, the standard of Goss workmanship is the same.

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Children, centenarians, cycling clubs and cows,
Never let their vagaries your angry passions rouse:
If a Bright Young Thing cuts in, better let her through;
One Yahoo is quite enough, no need to make it two.
Sing a song of Safety First: it's good to be alive:
Roads are full of mentals, so be CAREFUL HOW YOU DRIVE.

ISSACHER

And Second Prize to H. B. M., who has thoughtfully annotated his entry with the numbers of the relative paragraphs of the Road Code:

SECOND PRIZE

I must keep to the left,[8] overtake on the right:[26]
Keep watch for a traffic policeman or light.[36]
I never must drive in competitive mood:
If the other man's nasty, I mustn't be rude.[14]
I mustn't cut in,[20] I mustn't cut out,[22]
I mustn't reverse without looking about.[35]
I must take special care—I swear I will—
On the crown of a bridge, on the brow of a hill,[33]
At cross-roads, at corners, at bends,[29] at the bar[4]
When passing a stationary lorry or car.[19]
I must look out for children, the old, and the lame,
Making a due allowance for same.[15]
I must give the right signals with time and to spare:[37]
I must drive on dark, slippery, wet roads with care.[12]
I must not make too much noise with engine or horn:[51]
My brakes must be sound[53] and my tyres not too worn.[54]

Then when accidents happen the fault won't be mine,
Which will comfort me greatly when paying the fine.

H. B. M.

## CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

### PROBLEM 141.—FISHY

Six teams took part in the Inter-Aquarium Hockey tournament. Each team played each of the others once.

The result was remarkable. All the teams scored the same number of goals, and all had the same number of goals scored against them. Each team, moreover, scored at least one goal in each match, yet in no two matches did any one team score the same number of goals. No team attained double figures in any match. And no two teams attained the same distribution of goals scored among the various matches played.

Finally, the goals scored against each team were differently distributed for all the teams; in fact these distributions exactly corresponded to those of the "goals scored."

It was agreed that the Championship of the League should go to the team that secured most points (on the usual basis of two points for a win and one point for a draw). If two or more teams were equal as regards points scored, the championship was to be decided on goal average; if two or more teams were still equal, the championship would depend on the results obtained by these teams, in their matches one with another, matches played against other teams being ignored. Here again "points scored" were to count, and goal average if points were equal.

The following results are available:

The Soles only won one match, against the Dabs, whom they defeated 9–1. As regards the Soles' other matches, the Flounders beat them 2–1; the Turbots 4–2; the Kippers 6–3; and the Eels 7–5. Moreover the Turbots beat the Kippers 8–5, and the Eels beat the Dabs 5–4.

*Who won the championship?*

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## SOLUTIONS

### PROBLEM 138.—VILLAGE IDYLL

*Phyllis Driver married young Baker.*

Professor Helmut Hasse's solution will interest logicians:

*Proof:* Let B, C, D, F, S denote the five men, or women, or vocations, and fX the bride of Mr. X, gX the man with the vocation X. Then f and g are permutations of the five symbols B, C, D, F, S which leave none of these symbols unchanged. Furthermore,

$$fS = B$$
$$fD = gB$$
$$fgC = S$$
$$fgB = gC$$

As in my solution of Problem 136, f is either a 5-termed cycle or the composite of a 3-termed and a 2-termed cycle. Now f changes successively

$$D \to gB \to gC \to S \to B.$$

This chain cannot form a 2-termed cycle, because it contains the 3 different symbols D, S, B; nor a 3-termed cycle, because gB is not = B. Hence f is a 5-termed cycle, and therefore fB = D, as stated above.

*Remark. Mr. Baker is either farmer or smith.*

*Proof.* Permutation f is fully determined:

| Men X | Brides fX |
|---|---|
| B | D |
| D | C |
| C | F |
| F | S |
| S | B |

For permutation g there are three possibilities such that gB = C, gC = F, and no symbol is unchanged, namely

| Vocation Y | Men gY |
|---|---|
| F S D | B |
| D D F | D |
| C C C | C |
| B B B | F |
| S F S | S |

In the first two of these cases permutation gf also leaves no symbol unchanged, as required in the Problem, whereas in the third case permutation gf leaves D unchanged. Hence B = gF or gS only.

Notice that for the main result (fB = D) the condition that no man has the same vocation as his name was only used in so far as it implies gB not = B, and that the condition that no man has the same vocation as the maiden-name of his bride was not used at all.

### PROBLEM 139.—ROBINSON'S RENDEZVOUS

(*Mr. A. G. Stripp's solution.*)

Robinson's "joke" over the telephone is quickly seen—what he really meant was "To-morrow we'll be on the Wey."

Next, the 10.4 from Waterloo stops, among other places, at Woking, Farnham and Alton, and all these towns are on the river Wey. To settle which of them was Robinson's rendezvous we must examine the message he sent.

Here it is pretty clearly indicated that the key to the problem is the number 365, the number of days in a year, and that we have to use the digits 3, 6 and 5 so as to produce a verse.

Taking the 3rd letter of the message, the 6th letter after it, and the 5th after that, then the 3rd, the 6th, and the 5th again in the same way, and so on throughout, we "locate" the "set of tenable letters":—

The following rhyme is then revealed:—

Who should not go beyond his last
A town suggests; from there,
With Lion-church and Avalon,
Our place is on the square.

Now it is proverbial that "The cobbler should stick to his last" (originally, see Webster's Dictionary under "last," should not go beyond his last), and the town that the cobbler suggests can surely only be Northampton. Lion-church is Leominster, and Avalon (see any Encyclopaedia) is identified with the town of Glastonbury.

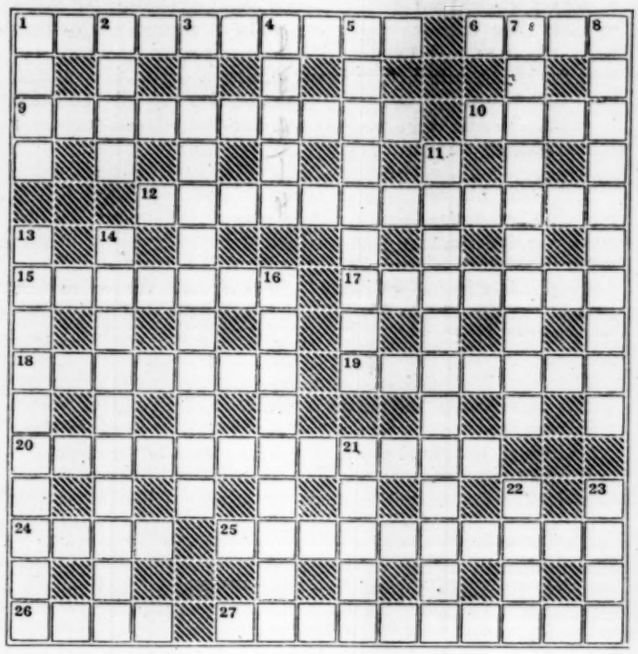
Reference to the map of England shows that these three towns lie almost exactly on three corners of a square. We evidently have to find the place which lies on the fourth corner.

This can only be *Alton*.

CALIBAN.

## WEEK-END CROSSWORD 287

**The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday. Prize-winners should address their claims to the Editor.**



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
A. L. Symonds, 60 Scotland Road, Chesterton, Cambridge

ACROSS.

1. Not a winner in the Ladies' Race.
6. A Spanish hero, and the answer is like a lemon.
9. Herrick's call for Julia's lips.
10. To go back to a Holy Roman Emperor.
12. They should, of course, have illuminated hands.
15. Obviously only one style of clothes suits him.
17. Pig fat with nothing on.
18. N.C.O.'s mon!
19. Competitive inventors.
20. Nursery rime inn where the third has the guts of the first.
24. Legislation made pointed.
25. Tallboy would have been a more suitable nickname for this forester.
26. What to do in the ring.
27. Mussolini's intention, it seems.

DOWN.

1. There's no art to find the mind's construction in it.
2. Roman law is beneath me.
3. The hinge, of course.
4. A broken heart brings one to this.
5. Adequate bridges for Blondin.
7. They did not hunt inhabitants of Poland.
8. Often leads to one going nap.
11. They don't all lie.
13. Used, no doubt, for distant drawing on the blackboard.
14. A big one of them houses this review.
16. Meshing it up again.
21. Mine to decide.
22. Look, O departed one, the god of strife.
23. A French negative.

### LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | L | A | S | S | E | D | ■ | U | N | F | O | L | D | S |
| O | ■ | P | ■ | P | A | N | ■ | R | ■ | I | ■ | C | ■ | ■ |
| R | E | P | R | E | S | S | E | D | ■ | O | Z | O | N | E |
| N | ■ | L | ■ | A | ■ | H | ■ | E | ■ | S | ■ | N | ■ | P |
| C | H | E | E | R | ■ | I | R | R | I | T | A | T | E | S |
| O | ■ | ■ | ■ | M | ■ | N | ■ | G | ■ | ■ | ■ | A | ■ | I |
| B | A | T | H | I | N | G | C | O | S | T | U | M | E | S |
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| A | ■ | E | ■ | ■ | ■ | A | ■ | N | ■ | T | ■ | ■ | ■ | A |
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| S | P | Y | H | O | L | E | ■ | D | O | G | L | E | A | D |


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August, 1935. EDWARD CAREY, Registrar.

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HENRY SPINK,
Director of Education

County Hall,
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August 26th, 1935.

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# THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

OIL CONCESSIONS AND OIL SHARES — BRITISH FILMS AND THE INVESTOR—ATLAS CORPORATION AND MR. ODLUM

THE Stock Exchange is patently waiting to boost prices as soon as the way is clear at Geneva. Meanwhile the talk is about oil. Although American oil companies generally expect an oil shortage in ten years' time, the Standard Oil-Vacuum was not suspected of complicity in the Abyssinian oil concession. As a political nuisance it would have been good politics for the Italians secretly to back Mr. F. W. Rickett with Italian capital. Mr. Rickett, I believe, has previously acted for a variety of national interests. He negotiated for the B.O.D. (British Oil Development) Company, which was the rival to the Iraq Petroleum Company, and eventually obtained the oil rights west of the Tigris. Mosul Oil Fields, Ltd. was formed in 1932 with a capital of £2½ millions to acquire the Iraq properties of the B.O.D., and the capital is distributed between British, Italian and German interests. The Italians greatly value this investment, for the Mosul Oil Fields, Ltd. has proved its oilfield and is proposing to lay another pipe-line to the coast. The Italian Government is obviously worrying over its oil requirements. Among its new financial decrees was one requiring that every Italian motor car produced for 1937 or thereafter must be designed for the use of fuels other than petrol or imported spirits. Italy is not so happily situated as Germany which, by extracting petrol from its brown coal through the hydrogenation process, has made itself independent of foreign oil up to 75 per cent. of its domestic (peace-time) requirements. These oil developments are not without significance for investors holding the shares of the international oil companies.

* * *

It is not strictly true to say that there may be an oil shortage in ten years' time. As the prices of natural oil products rise it will pay to develop more intensively the coal distillation or hydrogenation processes. At the moment America is still overproducing —and wasting—its natural oil resources. The Standard Oil Company of California has recently cut the price of crude oil in California by 50 cents a barrel, for a gasoline price war has been raging on the Pacific Coast ever since the breakdown of the oil cartel which followed on the unconstitutionality of the N.R.A. The Oil Bill, which was passed by Congress in its last hectic week of legislation, did nothing to correct the Californian oil situation. It provided for an "Inter-State Oil Compact," allowing the States to agree among themselves upon a restriction of output scheme, but it did not—and could not—force the States to curb their domestic producers. The American oil industry must, therefore, wait for the Californian war to end before it can look for higher prices. The same applies to the British market, but the knowledge that the consumption of oil products is steadily increasing in America and elsewhere should encourage shareholders to be patient.

* * *

Mr. John Maxwell, the chairman of the Associated British Picture Corporation, has a selfish interest, of course, in discouraging independent film production in independent British studios, but his words of warning at his shareholders' meeting on August 28 deserve publicity. In the past twelve months British film production has become increasingly difficult. Costs have steadily risen and gross receipts have not increased proportionately. Mr. Maxwell declared: "There has been a great and unusual flow of money into film production, and it has not always been wisely and properly spent. Large sums of money have been spent extravagantly, with the result that costs are being forced up all round. I would deplore a return to the conditions that had existed in 1928 to 1929 when almost £2,000,000 had been lost in the liquidation or reconstruction of film production companies." Mr. Maxwell pointed out that the Associated British Picture Corporation was not greatly dependent upon its film production department: even if studio conditions remained difficult, the profits of the Corporation as a whole should be maintained or even increased. So much could not be said of the Gaumont British. Mr. Maxwell does not believe in spending vast sums upon his productions: the Gaumont British executives apparently do. The probability is that the Gaumont British will eventually stand or fall on the output of their studios. Having regard to the speculative nature of the film production business one marvels at the courage of the Prudential Assurance Company in subscribing heavily to the debenture stock and preference shares of London Film Productions (Mr. Korda) whose vast studios at Denham are now in process of construction. Speculative investors interested in British films, who have not the courage or funds of the Prudential, might confine their attention to the 5 per cent. debenture stock of the Associated British Picture Corporation quoted at 99⅞ to yield £5 1 0 per cent.

* * *

Activity in American film stocks on Wall Street reminds me that the Atlas Corporation last spring underwrote the new Paramount reorganisation for about $6,400,000, and that interesting things may happen with the Paramount group. Atlas is the dark horse among the American investment trusts and is very ably managed by Mr. F. B. Odlum. During the dark days of the depression Mr. Odlum bought control of twenty-two unsuccessful investment trusts at prices well below their break-up values, including such giants as Sterling Securities, Goldman Sachs Trading, Shenandoah and Blue Ridge. Of these twenty-two companies, fourteen have been liquidated, three are in process of liquidation, one has been sold and four remain controlled, but as yet unmerged. Mr. Odlum's management of securities is very efficient. For example, in April, 1933, Atlas had $21.8 millons invested in public utility securities (18.3 per cent of total assets). At the end of 1934 it had only $1.8 millions so invested (1.7 per cent. of total assets). It is difficult to catch out Mr. Odlum. The consolidated holdings of the Atlas group at the end of 1934 were distributed as to 84.95 per cent. in common stocks, 7.66 per cent. in preferred stocks and 7.39 per cent. in bonds, and of the common stocks 83.2 per cent. were industrials. There are 4,213,516 shares of Atlas common stock outstanding (and 260,709 $3 preferred shares, but no bonds) and the net asset value at the end of June, 1935, was $11.05 per common share (against $5.06 at the end of 1929). Dividends on the preferred shares have been regularly paid, and on August 8th the directors declared an initial dividend of 30 cents a share on the common stock. In declaring this dividend they said that they could give no assurance that dividends would be regularly paid, but hoped that a further distribution would be possible after the end of the current year. At around $13 Atlas common stock is an interesting speculation. A purchaser is backing Mr. Odlum and the common stock market of America.

ABYSSINIAN JOURNEY

by MARCEL GRIAULE

"M. Griaule's observation of the country and of the customs and manners of the natives is close indeed—what they talk about among themselves, their views on things in general and their masters in particular, the way their Christian religion, entangled as it is with fear of bad spirits and superstitions of all sorts, dominates their mind and doings—all is accurately, and often amusingly, set down."

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ABYSSINIAN JOURNEY

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# The Abyssinian Dispute

**SUPPLEMENT** **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1935**

## THE BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

*This supplement is prepared by the group of expert students of international affairs who were responsible, under the pseudonym of "Vigilantes," for the remarkable pamphlet, "The Dying Peace" published by* THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, *in September,* 1932

ABYSSINIA is the last surviving independent African State. Many and determined attempts were made during the heyday of Imperialism and the scramble for markets at the end of the nineteenth century to divide Abyssinia among the Great Powers. The country survived only through the fighting qualities of its population, aided by the climate and the mountains and deserts behind which they lived. Italy concluded a Treaty with Abyssinia in which, in the Italian text, Abyssinia agreed to resort to the good offices of Italy in her relations with other Powers, whereas the Amharic text merely said that Abyssinia could, if she chose, resort to the good offices of Italy for this purpose. The difference between the two texts was the difference between a Protectorate and independence, and led to the war in which the Italians were decisively defeated at Adowa in 1896 and subsequently recognised Abyssinia's independence.

The attempts to establish spheres of influence in Abyssinia continued and resulted, on December 13th, 1906, in the so-called Tripartite (London) Agreement between Great Britain, France and Italy. This was a typical pre-war Treaty, such as the agreements between France and Great Britain over Morocco, and between Russia and Great Britain over Persia. The Tripartite Agreement began by guaranteeing the independence and integrity of Abyssinia, and then specified the way in which it would in due course be divided up between the contracting parties. The preamble to the Agreement declares:

> It being the common interest of France, Great Britain and Italy to maintain intact the integrity of Ethiopia, to provide for every kind of disturbance in the political conditions of the Ethiopian Empire, to come to a mutual understanding in regard to their attitude in the event of any change in the situation arising in Ethiopia, and to prevent the action of the three States in protecting their respective interests, both in the British, French and Italian possessions bordering on Ethiopia and in Ethiopia itself, from resulting in injury to the interests of any of them—the Government of the French Republic, the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and the Government of Italy have assented to the following Agreement:

### The Agreement of 1906

Article 1 of the Agreement states that "France, Great Britain and Italy shall co-operate in maintaining the political and territorial *status quo* in Ethiopia as determined by the state of affairs at present existing and by the following Agreements." (Here are specified nine several agreements and protocols between the contracting parties with respect to Abyssinia or between one of them and Abyssinia. The protocols go back to one of 1891 recognising virtually the whole of Abyssinia as an Italian sphere of influence.)

Article 2 binds the three Powers when demanding agricultural, commercial and industrial concessions in Abyssinia "to act in such a way that concessions which may be accorded in the interest of one of the three States may not be injurious to the interests of the other two."

By Article 3 they pledge themselves to non-intervention in Abyssinian internal affairs, and by Articles 6 and 7 to prolong the Jibuti railway to Addis Ababa and to arrange that an Englishman and an Italian, as well as a representative of the Emperor of Abyssinia, shall be appointed members of the French Railway Company, and that the British and Italian Governments shall put a Frenchman on any boards they may form to build railways in Abyssinia.

Article 4 says that

> In the event of the *status quo* laid down in Art. 1 being disturbed, France, Great Britain and Italy shall make every effort to preserve the integrity of Ethiopia. In any case they shall act together, on the basis of the Agreements enumerated in the above-mentioned Article, in order to safeguard:
>
> (a) The interests of Great Britain and Egypt in the Nile Basin, more especially as regards the regulation of the waters of that river and its tributaries (due consideration being paid to local interests), without prejudice to Italian interests mentioned in 8(b);
>
> (b) The interests of Italy in Ethiopia as regards Eritrea and Somaliland (including the Benadir), more especially with reference to the *hinterland* of her possessions and the territorial connection between them to the west of Addis Ababa;
>
> (c) The interests of France in Ethiopia as regards the French Protectorate on the Somali Coast, the *hinterland* of their protectorate and the zone necessary for the construction and working of the railway from Jibuti to Addis Ababa.

Abyssinia protested against this Treaty at the time, saying that as she was not a party it had no binding force, and that the three Great Powers had no right to dispose of the future of Abyssinia.

### Abyssinia Enters the League

During the war Italy had to be lavishly bribed by France and Great Britain to abandon Germany and to come in on the side of the Allies in 1915. The bribe included generous but unspecified promises of colonial concessions in Asia Minor and East Africa, which the Italians have ever since regarded as including moral and diplomatic support for helping themselves to Abyssinia. In 1919, at the time of the peace negotiations, the Italian Government pressed for the implementing of these promises but could not win British assent, for reasons that will be made plain in a moment.

In 1923, France, with Italian support, took the initiative in bringing Abyssinia into the League. The moving spirit in this matter was M. Hanotaux, who was then French Foreign Minister and who had been Minister of Colonies at the time of Fashoda. The bringing of Abyssinia into the League was looked upon by the French and Italian Colonial Ministries as a clever move to frustrate what was believed to be British designs on Abyssinia—for such was the interpretation put upon the agitation that had then begun in Great Britain against slavery in the country.

The British delegate expressed doubts as to whether Abyssinia should be admitted. These doubts were not shared by Signor Mussolini's representative, Count Bonin-Longare, who, according to the Minutes of the Sixth Committee of the Assembly:

> considered that Abyssinia's request constituted a tribute to the League of Nations. This tribute was of great value as coming from a distant nation which had hitherto remained outside the great international movements, but which, by the remarkable tenacity with which it had been able to preserve its religious faith and national character throughout the ages, had acquired titles of nobility to which due justice must be paid.

M. de Jouvenel, the French delegate, repeated the arguments of his Italian colleague as to the efforts being made by the Abyssinian Government to suppress the slave traffic and the beneficial effect Abyssinia's entrance into the League would have on this question. He added:

> As to the question of domestic serfdom, it must be confessed that many Governments found themselves faced with similar difficulties in their African territories. Such was the case in the French colonies, the Belgian Congo, etc.
>
> All these considerations led to the conclusion that . . . the Committee ought to recommend the Assembly to admit Abyssinia to the League, and that any delay in the admission of that country might prejudice the cause of peace and prestige of the League. If an incident were to take place within the coming year on the frontiers of Abyssinia and it was settled by force, the League would be blamed for such recourse to force because it had failed to come to a decision in time.

Abyssinia was finally admitted on her Government's undertaking to do their best to end the slave trade and slavery. The Slavery Report of the League (1935) gives credit to Abyssinia

for the progress it has made in this matter, and incidentally points out that conditions akin to slavery prevail in the adjacent Italian colony of Eritrea. Authorities agree that determined efforts have been made by the Emperor to reform and modernise his country; and that the greatest obstacle to reform in the last two or three years has been the growing danger of an Italian attack, which has necessitated concentration on the question of national defence and made it impossible for the Emperor to carry out reforms that would irritate the military and conservative elements in the country

### Britain and Italy in 1925

Two years after Abyssinia's admission to the League there was an exchange of Notes between Italy and the Baldwin Government. On December 14th, 1925, Sir Ronald Graham, British Ambassador in Rome, wrote to Signor Mussolini. Beginning with the vital importance to Egypt and the Sudan of maintaining the flow of water from the Blue and White Niles, he referred to the so far fruitless attempt to obtain a concession for a barrage on Lake Tana. He recalled that in 1919 Italy had offered co-operation in this enterprise, together with support for Britain in the effort to secure a motor road between Lake Tana and the Sudan. Italy in return asked for British support in her plan for a railway from the frontier of Eritrea to the frontier of Italian Somaliland, passing to the west of Addis Ababa, with free passage across the motor road. Italy demanded an exclusive economic interest in West Ethiopia and the whole territory crossed by the railway, and a promise of support for all requests to Ethiopia for economic concessions regarding the Italian zone.

The above offer, it was recalled, had not been entertained in 1919, since strong objection was felt to a foreign Power's establishing any sort of control over the head waters of the rivers. But the British Government was desirous of further friendly co-operation with Italy, and they recognised that the Italian offer was not in contradiction of the London Agreement (1906), since its object was to maintain the *status quo*. They now welcomed the offer, provided that it could be accepted without prejudice to the paramount hydraulic interests of Egypt and the Sudan. The British Government accordingly asked for support at Addis Ababa in the matter of the barrage concession; and in return they would support the Italian plan for the railway and were prepared to recognise an exclusive Italian economic interest in the zone above referred to.

Signor Mussolini replied on December 20th, 1925, noting in particular that the proposals of 1919 were now acceptable, and expressing the hope that friendly co-operation might be further extended so as to cover all Italian and British interests in Ethiopia The Duce promised support for the dual British plan of barrage and road, in return for British support of the railway project. He added that in the event of either Government failing to secure a concession, the Government which had obtained satisfaction would not relax their efforts on behalf of the other. The Duce remarked in this Note that the proposals of 1919 formed part of "a wider negotiation of a colonial character" arising out of the Treaty of London, 1915. This reference was, of course, to the attempts made at the Peace Conference to give effect to the sweeping annexationist demands in the secret treaties—the bribe for bringing Italy into the war.

### The Protest of 1926

The next public development came on June 19th, 1926, when the Emperor addressed a protest to the Secretary-General of the League for circulation to all member States.

The Emperor said that his Government had been profoundly moved by the conclusion of the Italo-British Agreement, without their being consulted or informed. On admission to the League Ethiopia had been told that all nations were to be on a footing of equality within the League, and that their independence was to be universally respected. One of the subjects covered by the Agreement had already been discussed between Ethiopia and Britain, and been left undecided. The people of Abyssinia were anxious to do right, but throughout their history they had seldom met with foreigners "who did not desire to possess themselves of Abyssinian territory and to destroy their independence." Prudence, therefore, was needed if the people were to be convinced that foreigners seeking concessions were genuinely innocent of concerted political aims; "nor must it be forgotten that we have only recently been introduced to modern civilisation." The Emperor, then, wished to hear from members of the League.

On August 3rd, 1926, the British Government addressed a Note to the Secretary-General of the League. They regretted that the purport of the Agreement should have been misconstrued by the Abyssinian Government. There was nothing in the Anglo-Italian Notes to suggest coercion or the exercise of pressure. The two Powers had no intention of dividing the country economically. Of course, the Abyssinian Government had a perfect right to judge of what was in the interests of Abyssinia. The Note concluded with a statement to the effect that Sir Austen Chamberlain would be happy to repeat these assurances at the League Council.

The Italian reply to the Emperor was dated August 4th. It affirmed that the Emperor's Government had not understood the letter and spirit of the Agreement, in which there was nothing to justify apprehension on the part of Ethiopia.

The Emperor's rejoinder was sent to the Secretary-General on September 4th. It urged that the procedure of the two Powers, in making an agreement without the knowledge of Abyssinia, was incompatible with the terms of the Covenant, "since it constituted an indirect threat to the secular territorial integrity and political independence of Abyssinia. . . . In our view, under Art. 20 of the Covenant, they had no right to contract such an agreement." The Abyssinian Government would have felt no further apprehension had not the two Powers brought the agreement officially to their notice on the same day. The Ethiopian Government took cognisance of the announcement that the Notes exchanged were to be deposited with the Secretariat of the League, and requested that their letter of protest be likewise registered and published, in order that the public might be acquainted with Ethiopia's views on the Notes and with the reassurances given by the two Powers.

In 1928 Italy concluded with Abyssinia a treaty of amity and conciliation. By Article 5 the parties agree to submit any dispute not settled by diplomatic means to conciliation and arbitration, and not to have recourse to force. By Article 2, "each Government undertakes not to engage under any pretext in action calculated to endanger or prejudice the independence of the other."

One of the Italian grievances is that instead of allowing Italy to step in and develop the country, the Emperor has actually been himself attempting to civilise and modernise his own people, and has in this connection devoted special attention to making the national defence more effective.

### Outbreak of the Italo-Abyssinian Conflict

With this background it should have been clear to the British Government from the first that the Italo-Abyssinian conflict was of the most serious character. The ostensible cause was a frontier incident—one of many—at Wal Wal, between Italian native troops and an Abyssinian force. But it so happened that just before the incident an Anglo-Abyssinian Boundary Commission had been on the spot. The British members of the Commission, in signed letters and affidavits which were communicated to both the British and Abyssinian Governments and transmitted by the latter to the League, declared that the Italian troops at Wal Wal were on Abyssinian territory, and that their behaviour was provocative. The British Commissioner, Colonel Clifford, added that as far back as 1932 the local Italian Commander had sent a communication implying a claim to Wal Wal to the British Somaliland Administration, which the latter had refused even to answer on the ground that the claim was inadmissible.

At the end of July, 1935, Mr. Vernon Bartlett, in a series of despatches to the *News Chronicle*, reported that the preparations for the conquest of Abyssinia, for which the Wal Wal incident merely served as a pretext, had been begun by Signor Mussolini in July, 1934, when he gave General Badoglio and an Italian military Commission the task of proceeding to Eritrea to investigate and report upon the prospects and nature of a campaign. The reports were of an exceedingly discouraging character, as were the subsequent reports of the General Staff.*

By January, 1935, the Italian Colonial Office vote had been heavily increased; Signor Mussolini had made himself Colonial Minister, and General de Bono, a notorious fire-eater and advocate of a war of conquest upon Abyssinia, had been appointed Governor-General of "Italian East Africa" (a new title, suggesting the union of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, which happen to be separated

* We are reliably informed that Signor Mussolini tore up the General Staff report in a fury when he received it. He began with the assumption that 70–80,000 men and a maximum of 200,000,000 to 250,000,000 lire a month would be sufficient for the expedition; by May 1935 his General Staff had convinced him that 3–400,000 men and a correspondingly greater expenditure would be necessary.

The duration of the war is reckoned by Italian military experts at two years; by most foreign experts at at least four years, followed by guerrilla fighting for an indefinite period.

by Abyssinia). The Italian press explained that the object of this appointment was to settle once and for all the whole question of Italo-Abyssinian relations. The flow of Italian troops and war material through the Suez Canal began in the last months of 1934, and swelled steadily.

The Italian press in the first months of the affair boasted of the fact that the Italian Government were keeping close touch with the British Government and informing them of views and plans.

In short, there can be no reasonable doubt that the Foreign Office and the Government were very well aware from the outset of what Italy's violent reaction to the Wal Wal incident portended.

Nevertheless, when Abyssinia brought the matter before the League in January under Article 11 of the Covenant the Baldwin Government brought the strongest pressure to bear for Abyssinia to enter into direct negotiations with Italy. These negotiations were to be conducted in the spirit of Article 5 of the 1928 Treaty. The Italian contention from the first was that the question of the right of the Italian troops to be at Wal Wal should be ruled out, that the Abyssinians should apologise, salute the Italian flag and pay an indemnity, and that no other issue should be discussed except that of responsibility for the Wal Wal incident. The Abyssinians demanded arbitration, not only on this incident, but on the question of where their frontier with Italy should run, and on any other issue that Italy chose to raise. In addition to offering arbitration on all issues they undertook beforehand to accept any decision of the Council.

### Enter the League Council

As the situation went from bad to worse Abyssinia in March invoked also Articles 10 and 15 of the Covenant and begged for speedy measures to put an end to the danger of war.

The British and French Governments met Signor Mussolini at Stresa in April. The British delegation brought along an Abyssinian expert but seem not to have plucked up courage to mention the subject to the Duce.

Abyssinia's appeal to have the matter discussed at the special Council Meeting in April (where France, Great Britain and Italy joined in condemning Germany's failure to abide by her treaty obligations and swore to uphold the Covenant) was rejected.

At the regular Council meeting in May a formula was devised which again postponed the whole issue and left it to two Italian and two Abyssinian conciliators to discuss the question of responsibility for the Wal Wal incident, on the basis of ambiguous terms of reference which left open the question of whether the Commission's terms of reference should, or should not, include the question of whether the Italian forces at Wal Wal were on Abyssinian territory. No method was even suggested of dealing with the general issue of the relations between Italy and Abyssinia, although by that time it was clear that the Wal Wal incident was a mere pretext and the officially controlled Italian press was openly stating that Italy's object was the conquest of all Abyssinia.

Fresh urgent appeals from Abyssinia, including an offer to pay for neutral observers to be sent to the spot by the Council, were ignored. The ambiguity in the terms of reference of the Council and Arbitration Commission duly resulted in a deadlock and in a breakdown of the negotiations. This made the Council meeting at the end of July unavoidable. Just before it there was much brave talk in press and Parliament as to the determination of the National Government this time to brook no further delay but to insist on the whole question being taken up by the Council, even if it meant a break with Italy. But when the Council met Mr. Eden collapsed and a formula was found which was even worse than that of the May meeting. It provided, on the one hand, that the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission should resume its work on the basis of accepting the Italian view as to its terms of reference (i.e., excluding the highly relevant issue of whether or not the Italian troops at Wal Wal had invaded Abyssinian territory). The meeting of the Council to take up the whole question was postponed from August 25th to September 4th. The three Great Powers, France, Great Britain and Italy, were then to endeavour to come to an agreement as to the future of Abyssinia, in negotiations without Abyssinia and based, not on the Covenant, but on the 1906 Treaty.

In these negotiations the British and French Governments proposed to Mussolini concessions in Abyssinia that were a violation of their obligation under the Covenant to respect and to preserve against external aggression Abyssinia's territorial integrity and political independence, and were prepared to let Italy use war as an instrument of national policy to secure these concessions if the Abyssinian Emperor refused to yield. The only result was to encourage Mussolini in his bellicose intransigence. The Paris negotiations accordingly broke down.

### British Cabinet's Fears

The Cabinet thereupon held an extraordinary meeting in August, to which Mr. Baldwin hurried from Aix and on the eve of which Mr. MacDonald announced that this was the gravest crisis since 1914. In one respect the 1914 precedent was followed, for the Cabinet left public opinion and the Governments of the world as uncertain as they had been on the crucial point of what, if anything, Great Britain would do if war broke out contrary to our obligations under Article 16 of the Covenant. The failure to decide what we would do for the collective defence of Abyssinia against aggression was accompanied by the decision to continue denying her the means to defend herself—i.e., to prolong the illegal and immoral embargo on the export of arms to Abyssinia. The fresh postponement in August of a decision on the point on which the Government should have made up their minds last January—namely, on the application of sanctions against the aggressor in this conflict—was explained to public opinion as being dictated by the desire not to act before the League had taken a decision as to who was the aggressor. This is to stand the Covenant on its head. As the Assembly stated in its resolution of 1921: "It is the duty of each Member of the League to decide for itself whether a breach of the Covenant has been committed." In a report adopted in 1927 the Assembly said: "It has been suggested that a State should not be allowed to intervene until the League itself has given its opinion. This would be questioning a right which States clearly derive from the Covenant." The Assembly further pointed out in 1921 and emphasised in 1927 that it is the duty of a Member State, when it believes there is danger of aggression, to summon the Council *before* war has broken out, in order to secure agreement on *preventive* action, including the threat and even the application of sanctions such as withdrawal of diplomatic representatives and a partial or even complete boycott, in order to secure compliance with the League's proposals for putting an end to the danger of war.

This official interpretation of the Covenant is binding on the British Government. It also corresponds to the common-sense of the situation, for (a) prevention is better than cure; (b) the League not being a super-state cannot act over the heads of its Members, and can move only in response to the decision of some Member State to take the initiative in calling for action—i.e., in proposing a policy and announcing its readiness to pursue such a policy in company with the rest of the League. It is natural for every reason, geographical (our command of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, etc.), military (the British navy's command of the Mediterranean) and political (Great Britain is a permanent Member of the Council, the strongest power in the League and in Africa, with the most influence on Italy and with the greatest interests at stake), that France and other League Powers should wait upon our lead. If we lead, the others will follow: if we announce what policy we have decided to pursue, the others will co-operate. So far the Government have shirked the duty of leading. The trouble is that inaction is as fervently desired by some members of the Government as it would be deplored by other members, and that a compromise between those who want to act and those who do not may once again lead to a mere pretence of action and then to action which is half-hearted, half-headed and too late. . . . We are in fact to-day half-way between these two phases.

### "Conciliation" and the 1906 Treaty

The extraordinary fact is that the British Government have from the outset been prepared to negotiate with Italy on the basis of their repudiation of the Covenant. In the early stages the Italians kept reminding the National Government of the 1906 Treaty and its various nineteenth-century Protocols, as well as of the pledges given in the 1925 Exchange of Notes. They pointed out that Abyssinia in May, 1935 (soon after the Council meeting) withdrew her objections to granting to Great Britain her dam-building concession on Lake Tsana, and urged that Great Britain should consequently support Italian claims (beginning with a railway joining Eritrea and Italian Somaliland across Abyssinia, and an economic sphere of influence).

Mr. Eden was sent to Rome to suggest the lines of an offer of this kind which was to be sweetened as regards Abyssinia by giving her a small strip of British territory and a port. The effect of this offer on Signor Mussolini was made plain at the time in a despatch from the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily*

*Telegraph*, saying that the Italian Government were not satisfied with the cession of some of the desert country in the lowlands, but wanted the fertile uplands of Abyssinia (i.e., the whole country). The Italian press has been insistent on the point that half measures were useless; it did not want merely a railway zone patrolled by Italian troops, for if Abyssinia were compelled to alienate half her independence she would be discontented and continually try to get back what she had lost. Therefore half measures were no use; Italy must make a complete job of it and take the whole.†

In other words, by tacitly agreeing with Italy that the Covenant is academic nonsense and does not apply, that Great Powers are free to do business outside the League at the expense of a small Member State, we have merely confirmed Signor Mussolini in the belief that since he is offered some 10 per cent. of what he wants as a result of merely threatening war, he is free to help himself to the rest by actually making war. The moment we abandon the ground of the Covenant the whole issue is reduced to Imperialist bargaining. The Powers have applied not the Covenant, but the pre-war 1906 Treaty, which is for the most part wholly incompatible with the letter and spirit of Article 10 of the Covenant —by which we are bound to respect and to preserve against external aggression Abyssinia's territorial integrity and political independence.

As an inevitable result, the Italian press has made no secret of its conviction that when it came to the point Italy would be just as free to do what she wanted and had just as little to fear from Great Britain as Germany or Japan. In private Italian diplomats have gone farther and deplored the Italian adventure, which they say may be ruinous for their country, adding with bitterness that Mussolini would never have gone to such lengths unless he was convinced of Great Britain's complacency.

The mischief, as Mr. Dell, the Geneva correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, pointed out on August 3rd, was that the Italians had never taken the British Government seriously—that is to say, they have never believed that the British Government would resort to energetic measures to prevent an Italian attack on Abyssinia. He then quoted Signor Forges-Davanzati, the editor of the *Tribuna* and an Italian senator, who broadcast from Rome on the wireless to the effect that he had just returned from a visit to London, and could assure Italians that they had nothing to fear from England. Mr. Dell summarised his conclusions in these words: "Look at the success that Japan and Germany have had by leaving the League of Nations. They have done just what they pleased. We have only to follow their example and the British Government will offer us concessions to get us back to Geneva just as it has to Hitler."

## The Arms Embargo

Abyssinia appealed to the Great Powers through the League to preserve her territorial integrity and existing political independence against Italian aggression, as they are bound in honour to do under Article 10 of the Covenant. She offered arbitration on all issues; she undertook beforehand to accept any decision of the League Council; she begged that neutral observers should be sent by the League to the spot and offered to pay for them; she urged the League (i.e., the Great Powers) again and again to put a stop to the grave danger of war; she even offered to cede part of her territory and to give Italy an economic sphere of influence for the sake of peace.

Signor Mussolini rejected arbitration on all but a minor issue, and then only on his own terms; he refused to recognise the League's authority to take up the dispute at all; he spurned the Abyssinian offers with contempt; in his public speeches and through his controlled press he vehemently announced his intention to wage a war of conquest against Abyssinia in order to convert this Member of the League into an Italian colony; he has for months been pouring troops and munitions through the Suez Canal (chiefly controlled by the British Government), into Eritrea, as part of his elaborate, far-reaching and public preparations to launch his war of conquest the moment the rainy season stops.

In face of this situation our National Government have for many months repeatedly shirked the duty to decide to apply the Covenant against the aggressor. That left them no alternative but to endeavour to placate the aggressor at the expense of his intended victim. The blessed word "conciliation" has been worked to death to camouflage this process. But conciliation based on foreknowledge in the potential aggressor that Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant will unhesitatingly be applied if he resorts to war, is one thing. "Conciliation" which is based on the would-be aggressor's tranquil certainty that the British Government cannot make up their minds to apply the Covenant in case of war, is something very different.

The latter is the type of "conciliation" practised hitherto by the National Government in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict, just as it was in the case of China and Japan. The bitter and ignoble fruits of these methods are apparent in Mussolini's growing arrogance and war preparations, in the wasting of the precious months that could have been used to prevent this wicked and gratuitous war, and in the prostitution of the League to give moral authority to the efforts of Great Britain and France to do an Imperialist deal with Italy which Abyssinia was to be compelled to accept under threat of war.

Because they are unwilling to stand by the Covenant at the risk of incurring Mussolini's displeasure, the National Government have felt obliged to yield to the Italian demand that we should refuse licenses for the export of arms to Abyssinia, although this happens to be a breach of our obligation in the 1930 arms traffic treaty with Abyssinia to allow the Abyssinian Emperor to supply himself with the arms he needs in self-defence. "Conciliation" of course is dragged in again to justify this embargo, which applies "equally" to Italy (who manufactures her own munitions) and to Abyssinia (who possesses not a single munitions factory). The argument is that by denying Abyssinia arms "conciliation" is more likely to succeed, for Italy will be pleased and Abyssinia will be less likely to resist whatever "raw deal" the three Great Powers may concoct.

What answer could be given to the Note of August 14th from the Abyssinian Government to the League?

> The Royal Italian Government is continuing to send troops and ammunition to East Africa. It is ceaselessly manufacturing arms and implements of war, with the openly avowed intention of using them against the Ethiopian Empire. There is no manufacture in Ethiopia, either public or private, of arms and munitions of war. The Imperial Ethiopian Government to-day finds it absolutely impossible to obtain means of defence outside its own frontiers. Wherever it attempts to obtain them it meets with prohibitions and export embargoes.
>
> Is that real neutrality? Is it just? Will the Council remain unmoved in face of this situation, which is steadily growing worse? Will it allow this unequal contest to continue between two members of the League of Nations, one of which is all-powerful, is in a position to employ, and has declared that it is employing, all its resources in preparing for aggression, while the other, weak and pacific and mindful of its international obligations, is deprived of the means of organising the defence of its territory and very existence, both of which are precious to it? Will the Council assume responsibility in the eyes of the world for allowing preparations to continue unchecked for the massacre of a people who constitute a menace to none?

Ironically enough the ethics of the matter have never been better stated than in the official statement of the Italian Government's position on the general principle of an arms embargo made on February 25th, 1935, by Admiral Ruspoli, the Italian delegate on the League Committee for Regulating the Traffic in Arms.

> In the Italian delegate's view, it was essential that States should be able, in case of necessity, to buy war material from foreign countries. . .
>
> He did not think that even the most extreme supporters of the League of Nations could contend that if, say, a powerful State tried to force a passage through the territory of a weaker State, or committed some such evident act of aggression as that, the ideals of the League would oblige them to place an embargo on the war material being manufactured for the weaker State that was being attacked. If so, it would obviously be a case of *summum jus summa injuria*, and if that were established, if there were merely the suspicion that in the case of war they would wash their hands like Pontius Pilate and treat the attacked and aggressor in the same way, it would, he thought, undermine the whole idea of the League of Nations and the mutual trust that they wanted to establish between nations.*

## What Will Happen?

The tragic fact is that it is now too late to prevent the war. So much time has been deliberately wasted, in order to postpone the disagreeable necessity of taking a decision about whether to abandon or to defend the Covenant, that war is now almost certain.†

The immediate prospect is a determined attempt at the Council to find excuses for further delay. Probably, however, Mussolini's action and the pressure of the small Powers in the Assembly

* From the Minutes of the twenty-third meeting. To do the gallant Admiral and his Government justice, they had clearly forgotten Abyssinia and were thinking of Italy's freedom to export arms to Paraguay and Hungary.

† Failing a political miracle, such as the collapse of the lire, the death of Signor Mussolini, or the official recognition of what is already common gossip in political circles in Rome—namely that the Duce's notorious paranoia is nearing the pitch of certifiable insanity.

will bring about a breach between Italy and the League. But in that case the breach itself will probably be taken as an excuse for another postponement, coupled perhaps with a moral condemnation of Italy, but without any assurance that sanctions will be applied if and when she goes to war. On the strength of this lack of assurance Mussolini will duly launch his bloody adventure, and once it has begun, the argument may then be used that it is now too late to act, and that we must therefore confine ourselves to attempts to " isolate " this war and to circumscribe its effects. On the other hand the Government may be confronted with a tidal wave of indignation, and may attempt some ineffective economic sanctions. The further danger is that having sabotaged the Covenant Great Britain, unsupported by other League Powers, may be embroiled in the Italo-Abyssinian war after it has started.

### Consequences of an Italo-Abyssinian War

Some of the dangers of this war were indicated by General Smuts in an interview on August 12th.

> This adventure cannot be looked upon as an isolated move. I think it will shake the whole system of civilisation to its foundations should the League fail at this critical moment. . . Europe will go back to the pre-war system of alliances, and will divide into hostile camps, wherein anything might happen. It is possible that Great Britain may be able to keep out of this so far as Europe is concerned. But a great conflict in Africa must have serious repercussions on British territories such as Sudan and Egypt. There is no doubt that the invasion of Abyssinia by Italy will arouse anxious feelings all over Africa between white and black, and may have serious results.
>
> The African does not yet look on the European as an enemy, but this trouble may raise intense racial and colour feeling and make the position of the European much more difficult. It may spread all over the African continent, and you may find that every African will sympathise with Abyssinia. . . . The danger is from dictators who are in a tight corner everywhere creating diversions by launching out on foreign adventures of this kind.

There is ample evidence from all over the coloured world—including Arabs, Indians, American and African negroes from Zululand to the Gold Coast—that General Smuts was not exaggerating. But he was unduly optimistic in his belief that Britain could remain unaffected by the ensuing European complications. If the League is destroyed, the world will return to the Balance of Power, to general rearmament and general war.

Meanwhile, Hitler watches and rejoices. A recent despatch from the Berlin correspondent of the *News Chronicle* graphically sums up Nazi Germany's attitude.

> Official Germany is wondering what concrete effect a war between Italy and Abyssinia would have on :
> (1) The future of collective security ;
> (2) The future structure of the League ;
> (3) Britain's role in future European conflicts ;
> (4) Italy's interests in Austrian independence.
>
> It cannot be too strongly stressed that Britain's behaviour during the present crisis will have a profound bearing on the methods Germany will employ when she starts to pursue her foreign policy aims vigorously in the future.
>
> Germany is well aware that her hand in Central Europe will be strengthened if Italy is weakened by a protracted struggle in Africa.
>
> Sir Samuel Hoare's officially expressed sympathy for Italian colonial aspirations naturally pleases Germany, for it fits in with her own desire for colonies or territorial expansion.
>
> Italy's proposed absorption of Abyssinia does not arouse horror here, but on the contrary awakens a sympathetic response in the German militaristic press.

The only comment required is that (*a*) this " militaristic press " is officially controlled and writes only what it is told to write by the German Ministry of Propaganda, and (*b*) this same press has repeatedly and gloatingly expressed its satisfaction at the prospect of the Italo-Abyssinian war completing the destruction of the League that was begun by Japan and Germany, and thereby giving Germany a free hand in her policy of territorial expansion in East and Central Europe, coupled with demands for colonies.

It should be clear, from the evidence adduced, that whoever wins in the Italo-Abyssinian war, Britain will be the loser. The Government have neither the righteous courage to honour our treaty obligations nor the cynical audacity to do a deal with Mussolini of the degree of turpitude required to satisfy that statesman. Therefore the Government have failed to prevent, and are unlikely to stop, the war. But, for the sake of their electoral position at home, and to placate the self-righteous among their own members, the Government will make it clear that we disapprove of the war that is taking place. In the eyes of the Italians and Abyssinians both, and of the watching coloured races of the world, Great Britain will be branded in Africa, as she already has been in Asia, as a coward and hypocrite whose bluff has been successfully called. The Japanese, when they bombed Chinchow and Chapei, were passively assisted by the National Government to shatter British prestige in the Far East. The Italians, when they gas the Abyssinians, will, thanks to our Government's policy, be simultaneously poisoning the moral foundations of the British Empire in Africa and the Near East.

The international consequences, in Europe and elsewhere, are sufficiently obvious. They form a fitting and cumulative sequel to the Government's record in the Far East, at the Disarmament Conference, and in the European negotiations.

But what of the domestic consequences ? The Government are openly preparing to lay staggering burdens on the taxpayer in order to pay for vast expenditure on armaments and on organising our whole national life, both morally and materially, for war. They say that this is necessary in order to enable us to " defend the collective system." But their whole foreign policy has been one continuous sabotage of that system, and their policy in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict bids fair to destroy it altogether.

### What Should Have Been Done

When Abyssinia appealed to the League under Article 11 in January, 1935, Italy's war preparations had been already in progress since September and her designs against Abyssinia were common knowledge. It was therefore the duty of the Government to refuse to accept the Italian plea that the Council should wash its hands of the matter, and that Abyssinia should be told to negotiate with Italy. We should have told the Italians that we could not regard as satisfactory even the application of the conciliation and arbitration procedure in the 1928 Treaty unless :

(*a*) it were extended to cover the whole of the dispute between the two countries ;

(*b*) time limits and procedure were fixed for the application first of conciliation and then of arbitration under the Treaty as well as for the appointment of the arbiters ;

(*c*) military preparations ceased and both parties accepted obligations not to resort to force and to establish a neutral zone supervised by League agents.

If the Italian Government had objected to such terms we should have said that if they refused them we could not accept responsibility for allowing the Suez Canal to be used as a line of communication for the concentration of troops and war material on a scale and in circumstances where they constituted a threat or danger of aggression within the meaning of Article 10 of the Covenant. We had a duty under that Article which the Government were determined to fulfil. As regards the 1906 Treaty and the 1925 Exchange of Notes they must be considered as invalid in so far as they were inconsistent with the obligation under Article 10 of the Covenant to respect and preserve against external aggression Abyssinian territorial integrity and existing political independence. By Article 20 of the Covenant its provisions override and supersede all other Treaty obligations and the British Government were determined to remain faithful to the Covenant. Within those limits they would do everything in their power to promote a general settlement with Abyssinia on the basis of technical assistance by the League in carrying out the Emperor's policy of modernising and developing his country.

There are many instances of the League's work—in Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, China—for the working out of such a scheme, for its application through the League's technical organisations and for general supervision through a Committee of the Council, on which Italy, France and Great Britain, as well as Abyssinia and one or two neutrals could be represented. Moreover, the British Government would co-operate in devising any safeguards that might be considered necessary to protect Italy's colonies and Abyssinia against each other as well as to give League assistance to the Emperor in putting down slavery and the slave trade.

At that time France, the Little Entente and Italy were all very much exercised about the problem of Austria and Germany. France and Italy had not come to any agreement with each other and both were extremely anxious for British support. The Balkan Entente looked with suspicion and dislike on Italian designs because they had not forgotten the attempts of Italy to interfere in the Balkans and to wreck the new Entente, nor had the Turks ever forgotten that Signor Mussolini in one of his inspired moments had declared that Asia Minor was the promised land for Italian expansion.

If the British Government had in January taken a strong, clear

and constructive line based on loyalty to the Covenant and coupled with readiness to take an active part in the organisation of collective security in Europe, we should have had the support of the whole Council. It is inconceivable that Italy would have resisted, for at that date Italian preparations had not gone so far as to create any irretrievable situation for the regime, and the whole enterprise was thoroughly unpopular in influential Fascist circles, not to mention the General Staff, the King and the Italian people.

But suppose that Mussolini had broken with the Council rather than give way? If so, it would have been physically impossible for him to go to war for nine months because of the rainy season in Abyssinia. The mere fact of the break with the Council would have meant that during those nine months Italian war preparations would have had to be carried on with the certain knowledge that if the war came it would involve a conflict not only with Abyssinia, but with the other Great Powers. In such circumstances Italian stocks, shares and currency would have started dropping, and the unpopularity of the whole adventure would have become so tremendous in Italy that Mussolini would have either had to give way or face the danger of his regime collapsing within a few months. The closing of the Suez Canal to Italian transports and shipments of war material, and the denial of facilities in British ports for the shipments, would have meant prohibitively long, expensive and inconvenient lines of communication via the Cape. It is about as certain as anything can be that if the Government had taken this line last January the conflict would have been over by now.

### The Stresa Meeting

But let us for the sake of argument admit that there was something to be said (although it is difficult to say what) for postponing the issue at the January Council Meeting and for not raising it at the Anglo-French conversations on February 3rd. What then should have been done at the Stresa meeting in April? By that time Abyssinia had appealed to Articles 10 and 15 of the Covenant as well as to Article 11, and the gravity of the situation had become plain to all except the wilfully blind. At Stresa the French and the Italians, acutely anxious at the menace to their safety presented by German designs on Austria, and by the announcement of German rearmament, were desperately eager for British support in the more effective organisation of collective security in Europe. The British Government could have refused to agree with these Powers as to what should be done in Europe except on the basis of their agreeing to some such programme as that outlined above for settling the Abyssinian dispute. France and Italy were so apprehensive and felt so directly threatened by Germany that the British Government had all the cards in hand and could have driven a hard bargain. As it was, although the British delegation brought along an East African expert, no one dared to broach the subject to Signor Mussolini. The plan of the moment was an anti-German Entente which, like the pre-war Entente, had to be cemented by Imperialist deals at the expense of "colonial" peoples. Before the war the victims were Morocco and Persia. To-day the architects of the old pre-war Entente are arguing that the "Stresa Front" as the embryo of the new pre-war Entente must be preserved by turning it into a Covenant-breaking front through an Imperialist deal on the basis of the 1906 Treaty that will give Italy a free hand in Abyssinia. The Italian argument that has been used most persistently and with the greatest effect in Paris and London, and has even been broadly hinted at in the Italian press, is that Italy must have a free hand to conquer Abyssinia in the next two years in order to forestall the danger to her rear from Germany inciting Abyssinia to attack the Italian colonies. Therefore, runs the argument, this preliminary war against Abyssinia is necessary in order to enable Italy to throw all her forces into the European war which may be expected in three or four years' time.

### The May Council Meeting

Now let us suppose that the Government, while pursuing the disastrous course taken in January at Geneva, in April at Stresa, and again at the Extraordinary Council Meeting in April, had subsequently become convinced that Britain must stand by the Covenant. In that case they could still have applied the policy outlined above at the Council Meeting in May. This policy was more difficult and riskier by then. In the first place Signor Mussolini had been encouraged by British pusillanimity to commit himself so thoroughly to his war that it would take tremendous pressure to make him withdraw, and in the second place, the French had been so disappointed at our failure to take an active part in the organisation of European security that they were seeking an alternative in an Italo-French military understanding. But our position in May was still overwhelmingly strong, and we could have carried the day for a League policy if the Government had made up their minds to apply sanctions against Italy in case of war.

### The July 31st Meeting

By the time the Council met again on July 31st, the situation had become very grave. It had grown worse and more menacing after each postponement; whereas it would have been easy in January to prevent war, the problem was difficult in July. War propaganda and war preparations had gone so far in Italy that to back out now would mean the end of the Fascist regime and so would be unthinkable short of a public threat of overwhelming force against aggression. French opinion had passed from misgivings as to the readiness of our National Government ever to honour any collective security commitments to fury at the betrayal of the collective system embodied in the Anglo-German naval agreement. The reactionary M. Laval had become Prime Minister and was relying more and more on a military understanding with Italy and on his East European allies as the basis of French security.

But in spite of all the propaganda in Italy the unpopularity of the whole adventure was still great. The Italian financial position had become positively alarming. M. Laval's position at home was weakening and the prospects of the "Front Populaire" upsetting him by the end of the year were considerable. Opinion in Left circles in France was becoming extremely critical of the Laval policy toward Italy and voices were raised more and more insistently, warning against the danger of parting company with Great Britain and the League for the sake of the fickle favours of Signor Mussolini and his Abyssinian liability. We know of no informed person, British, French or "neutral," who thinks that any French Government would hesitate for a moment if forced to choose between Great Britain and support of the Covenant on the one hand and Italy against the Covenant on the other. If the British Government told M. Laval that we had decided that if Italy went to war sanctions must be applied and France must choose whether to stand with us (in which case the two countries would henceforth work hand in hand for the strengthening of collective security in Europe) or must take the responsibility at a public Council Meeting of refusing to support our demand for the application of sanctions (in which case, for all practical purposes not only Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant, but the Locarno Treaties would become a dead letter)—if that issue had been put to M. Laval there is no doubt whatever that he would have promptly made up his mind to come down off the fence on our side.

Meanwhile British public opinion—through the vast Peace Ballot, through the press, the offer of support by the Labour Party, and through debates in Parliament—made it clear that the Government could count upon wholehearted and nation-wide support for any action that might be necessary in order to uphold the Covenant against aggression.

It was in these circumstances that the Cabinet met on July 24th. This time it did at least endeavour to face up to the question of what should be done if and when Mussolini went to war. But it failed to take any decision, and that failure was known in Paris, Rome and Geneva. A number of members of the Government, including what might be described as the old incorrigibles—Mr. MacDonald, Sir John Simon, Lord Londonderry, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Lord Hailsham—were against any decision to apply sanctions. In the circumstances Mr. Baldwin found it impossible to make up his mind and resorted to his favourite expedient of adjourning the question. The Government dispersed to their holidays.

In the circumstances when Mr. Eden arrived in Paris he was unable to give M. Laval any convincing reason for coming down off the fence. When Mr. Eden arrived in Geneva he was equally unable to supply any answer to the Italian delegate's threat that if the Council did not give way Italy would walk out of the League. Therefore the proceedings of the Geneva Council meeting were turned into a prolonged attempt by Mr. Eden to save his own and his Government's face by camouflaging his capitulation to Mussolini's demand that the League should cease its attempts to interfere with the war he was preparing. A new formula was devised. It committed the Italians to nothing, and treated the Covenant as a scrap of paper until September 4th. And that is what it will remain unless a remarkable change takes place this week.

# London Amusements

## MATINEES

*All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.*

**ALDWYCH.** The Dominant Sex. W., Sat.
**ALHAMBRA.** Tulip Time. Wed. & Sat.
**COLISEUM.** Gay Deceivers. Sat.
**DRURY LANE.** Glamorous Night. W. & S.
**DUCHESS.** Night Must Fall. Wed., Sat.
**GLOBE.** Accent on Youth. Wed., Sat.
**LYRIC.** Tovarich. Wed., Thurs.
**PHOENIX.** The Unguarded Hour. Thurs., Sat.
**QUEEN'S.** Wind & the Rain. Wed. & Sat.
**S.MARTIN'S.** The Two Mrs. Carrolls. Tu., F.
**STRAND.** 1066 and All That. Tu. & Thurs.
**VICTORIA PALACE.** Vintage Wine. W. & S.
**WYNDHAM'S.** Sweet Aloes. Wed. & Sat.

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Next Play, "The Apple Cart," etc.

**COLISEUM.** Charing X. Tem. Bar 3161.
Last 2 Perfs. Sat., Sept. 7th, at 2.30 and 8.30.
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**DUCHESS.** (Tem. 8243.) Evgs. 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
EMLYN WILLIAMS in his own Play
**NIGHT MUST FALL**
MAY WHITTY ANGELA BADDELEY

**GLOBE.** (Ger. 1592). Evgs. 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
Samson Raphaelson's Comedy,
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Nicholas Hannen, Greer Garson, Mary Glynne.

**LYRIC.** (Ger. 3686.) 8.30. Mats., Wed., Th., 2.30.
Gilbert Miller presents
**TOVARICH.**
CEDRIC HARDWICKE, EUGENIE LEONTOVICH.

**PHOENIX.** Tem. 8611. EVGS., 8.30. Th., Sat., 2.30.
GODFREY TEARLE, RACHEL BERENDT in
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**Youth at the Helm.** By Hubert Griffith.

**NORTHAMPTON** Repertory.
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**The Second Man.** S. N. Behrman.

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